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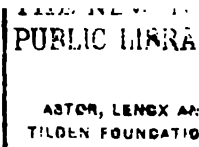
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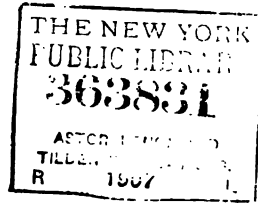
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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
Society for Psychical Research  
PART XLVI.  
JUNE, 1903.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.  
*Delivered on January 30th, 1903.*  
BY SIR OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.

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IN taking the Chair of this Society for one more year and giving a third Presidential Address, I think it desirable to treat the subject from a business point of view, and to consider on what lines the Society may profitably work in the future. It must be remembered that our primary aim is to be a Scientific Society, to conduct our researches and to record our results in an accurate and scientific manner, so as to set an example of careful work in regions where it has been the exception rather than the rule, and to be a trustworthy guide to the generation of workers who shall follow.

To be scientific does not mean to be infallible, but it means being clear and honest, and as exact as we know how to be. In difficult investigations pioneers have always made some mistakes, they have no immediate criterion or infallible touchstone to distinguish the more true from the less true, but if they record their results with anxious care and scrupulous honesty and painstaking precision, their mistakes are only less valuable to the next generation than their partially true generalisations; and sometimes it turns out, after a century or

so, that mistakes made by early pioneers were no such thorough errors as had been thought, that they had an element of truth in them all the time, as if discoverers were endowed with a kind of prophetic insight whereby they dimly glimpsed theories and truths which it would take several generations of workers to disencumber and bring clearly to light.

Suppose, however, that their errors were real ones, the record of their work is just as important to future navigators as it is to have the rocks and shoals of a channel mapped out and buoyed. It is work which must be done. The great ship passing straight to its destination is enabled to attain this directness and speed by the combined labours of a multitude of workers, some obscure and forgotten, some distinguished and remembered, but none of whom were able to realise the stately passage of the great ship through the channels marked out for it, and by aid of mechanism which they had taken a part in designing or constructing. So it is with every great erection; and the Forth Bridge stands upon piers sunk below the water-mark by the painful and long continued labours of Italian workmen in "caissons" full of compressed and heated air.

The study of specifically Natural knowledge was fostered and promoted by the recognition in the reign of Charles II. of a body of enthusiasts who, during the disturbed but hopeful era of the Commonwealth, had met together to discuss problems of scientific interest; and to-day the Royal Society is among the dignified institutions of our land, taking all branches of Natural Philosophy and Natural History—the Physical Sciences and the Biological Sciences—under its wing.

Us it does not recognise, but then neither does it recognise Mental and Moral Philosophy, or Ethics, or Psychology, or History, or any part of a great region of knowledge which has hitherto been regarded as outside the pale of the Natural Sciences.

It is for us to introduce our subjects within that pale, if it turns out that there they properly belong; and if not, it is for us to do pioneer work and begin the establishment of another Society or group of Societies for recognition and promotion of work in the mental, the psychological, the psychical direction, until the day for unification shall arrive.

Half knowledge sees divisions and emphasises barriers, delights in classification into genera and species, affixes labels, and studies things in groups. And all this work is of the utmost practical value and is essentially necessary. That the day will come when barriers shall be broken down, when species shall be found to shade off into one another, when continuity and not classification shall be the dominant feature, may be anticipated by all, but we have no power of hastening the day except by taking our place in the workshop and doing our assigned quota; still less have we any advantage in pretending that the day of unification has arrived while as yet its dawn is still in the future.

Returning to my thesis I say our primary aim is to be a scientific Society, doing pioneering and foundation work in a new and not yet incorporated tract on which future generations may build, and making as few mistakes as we can reasonably contrive by the exercise of great care.

We are not a literary society, though we have had men of letters among our guides and leaders; and we are not a religious society, though some of our members take an interest in our subject because it seems to them to have a bearing on their religious convictions or hopes. I will say a few words on both these points. First, our relations to literature.

The name of Francis Bacon is a household word in the history of English scientific ideas. I do not mean in the recent, and as it seems to me comic, aspect, that he wrote everything that was written in the Elizabethan era (a matter to which I wish to make no reference one way or the other, for it is completely off my path), but before that he was started his name was weighty and familiar in the history of English scientific ideas. It is instructive to ask why. Was he a man of Science? No. Did he make discoveries? No. Do scientific men trace back their ancestry to him? No. To Isaac Newton they trace it back, to Gilbert, to Roger Bacon, speaking for those in England; but of Francis Bacon they know next to nothing. Outside England all the world traces its scientific ancestry to Newton, to Descartes, to Galileo, to Kepler; but of Francis Bacon scientific men outside England have scarcely heard, save as a man of letters. Yet the pro-



gress of science owes much to him. All unconsciously scientific men owe to him a great debt. Why?

Because he perceived afar off the oncoming of the scientific wave, and because he was able, in language to which men would listen, to herald and welcome its advance.

Scientifically he was an amateur; but he was an enthusiast who with splendid eloquence, with the fire of genius, and with great forensic skill, was able to impress his generation, and not his own generation alone, with some idea of the dignity and true place of science, and to make it possible for the early pioneers of the Royal Society to pursue their labours unimpeded by persecution and to gain some sort of recognition even from general and aristocratic Society.

For remember that the term "science" was not always respectable. To early ears it sounded almost as the term witchcraft or magic sounded, it was a thing from which to warn young people; it led to atheism and to many other abominations. It was an unholy prying into the secrets of Nature which were meant to be hid from our eyes, it was a thing against which the Church resolutely set its face, a thing for which it was ready if need were to torture or to burn those unlucky men of scientific genius who were born before their time. I mean no one Church in particular: I mean the religious world generally. Science was a thing allied to heresy, a thing to hold aloof from, to shudder at, and to attribute to the devil. All which treatment that great and eminent pioneer, Roger Bacon, experienced at our beloved University of Oxford; because the time was not yet ripe.

How came it that in the days of the Stuarts the atmosphere was so different from that prevalent in the days of the Plantagenets? Doubtless the age of Elizabeth, the patriotism aroused by the Armada and by the great discoveries in geography, had had their vivifying effect; and the same sort of originality of thought which did not scruple to arraign a king for high treason likewise ventured to set orthodoxy at defiance, and to experiment upon and investigate openly all manner of natural facts. But I wish to maintain, or at least to suggest, that the result was largely due to the influence of the writings of Francis Bacon. He had accustomed scholars and literary men to the possibilities and prerogatives of scientific enquiry, he had emphasised

the importance and the dignity of experiment, and it is to his writings that the rapid spread of scientific ideas, discovered as always by a few, became acceptable to and spread among the many.

Do not let us suppose, however, that the recognition of science was immediate and universal. Dislike of it, and mistrust of the spread of scientific enquiry, persisted well into the Victorian era, and is not wholly extinct to this day.

I am not at the moment speaking of investigation into affairs of the mind—that is unpopular and mistrusted still, and still good people are found who will attribute anything unusual to the devil, and warn young people from it,—but I refer to some slight trace of lingering prejudice against the orthodox sciences of Chemistry and Physics and Biology. They have achieved their foothold, they are regarded with respect, people do not disdain to make money by means of them when the opportunity is forthcoming, but they are not really liked. They are only admitted to our Schools on sufferance, as an inferior grade of study suited to the backward and the ignorant; they are not regarded with affection and enthusiasm, as revelations of Divine working, to be reverently studied, nor as subjects in which the youth of a nation may be wholesomely and solidly trained.

Very well, still more is the time not quite ripe for our subject; pioneers must expect hard knocks, the mind of a people can change only slowly; and until the mind of a people is changed, new truths born before their time must suffer the fate of other untimely births; and the prophet who preaches them must expect to be mistaken for a useless fanatic, of whom every age has always had too many, and must be content to be literally or metaphorically put to death, as part of the process of the regeneration of the world.

The dislike and mistrust and disbelief in the validity or legitimacy of psychical enquiry is familiar. The dislike of the Natural Sciences is almost defunct. It survives undoubtedly; they are not liked but they are tolerated: and I am bound to say that part of the surviving dislike is due not alone to heredity and imbibed ideas, but to the hasty and intolerant and exuberant and splay-footed attitude of some

men of science, who, knowing themselves to be reformers, feeling that they have a grain of seed-corn to plant and water, cannot be content to go about their business in a calm and conciliatory spirit, but must seek to hurry things on by a rough-shod method of progression, which may indeed attain its ends, but gives some pain in the process, and perhaps achieves results less admirable than those which might have been attained by the exercise of a little patience, a little more perception of the point of view of others, a little more imagination, a little more of that recognition of the insignificance of trifles and of the transitory character of full-blown fashions which is called a sense of humour, a little more cultivation of the historic sense. In a word a little more general education.

I am digressing again. I was pointing out the importance of Francis Bacon as a man of letters in the history of the development of the national recognition of the natural sciences in England.

Has it struck you, it has often struck me, that in the history of the psychical sciences we too have had a Bacon, and one not long departed from us? Is it possible that in the two volumes, which to-day or to-morrow may be emerging from the press, we have a book which posterity will regard as a *Novum Organon*? History does not repeat itself, and I would not draw the parallel too close. It may be that posterity will regard Myers as much more than that, as a philosophic pioneer who has not only secured recognition for, but has himself formulated some of the philosophic unification of, a mass of obscure mental and barely recognised human faculty, and has thrown a light on the meaning of personality which may survive the test of time. It may be so, but that is for no one living to say. Posterity alone, by aid of the experience and further knowledge which time brings, is able to make a judgment of real value on such a topic as that.

Meanwhile it is for us to see that time does bring this greater knowledge and experience. For time *alone* is impotent. Millions of years passed on this planet, during which the amount of knowledge acquired was small or nil. Up to the sixteenth century, even, scientific progress was at the least slow. Recently it has been rapid—none too rapid, but rapid. The rate of advance depends upon the activities and energies of each

generation and upon the organisation and machinery which it has inherited from its immediate forebears.

The pioneers who created the S.P.R. have left it in trust with us to hand it on to future generations an efficient and powerful machine for the spread of scientific truth, and for the advancement of scientific knowledge in a direction overgrown with thickets of popular superstition, intermixed with sandy and barren areas of resolute incredulity. We have to steer our narrow way between the Scylla of stony minds with no opening in our direction, and the Charybdis of easy and omnivorous acceptance of every straw and waif whether of truth or falsehood that may course with the currents of popular superstition.

Realising this to be our duty, and perceiving that we have a long period of danger and difficulty before us, it has become evident to persons of clear vision that the Society must be established on a sound and permanent basis, and must endeavour to initiate an attitude of regarding the psychical sciences as affording the same sort of scope to a career, the same sort of opportunities of earning a livelihood, as do the longer recognised sciences,—those which are more specifically denominated “natural,” because of the way they fit into our idea of the scheme of nature as by us at present recognised, or at any rate because they deal with facts to which we have gradually grown accustomed.

Any young man who wishes to make money should be warned off the pursuit of pure science at the outset. People who enter the field with that object in view will do neither themselves nor science any good. A certain amount of enthusiasm and pioneering proclivity is essential, but fortunately that has never yet been wanting in our race; witness the hardships willingly entered upon, and the risks run, in Arctic or Antarctic exploration, for nothing more than a living wage. A living wage is however to many a necessity. It has always been recognised that those who labour at the altar should live by the altar; and a minimum of provision for bread and homely needs ought to be at the disposal of a Society like this where-with to enable a person of ability and enthusiasm to undertake the prosecution of our researches in a definite and continuous and so to speak professional manner. Hitherto we have

depended on the spontaneous and somewhat spasmodic work of amateurs, often of wealthy amateurs, before whose minds such questions as salary never even momentarily pass. We shall always have need of services such as theirs. In the more orthodox sciences, in Physics for instance, it has been notorious that throughout last century the best work has often been done by people who having the means of living otherwise secured to them were able to devote their time, and often considerable means too, to the prosecution of research. There has been no rule either way. Some of the leaders have been paid a small salary, like Faraday: others have had independent means, like Joule. Always I say we shall depend upon and be grateful for the spontaneous work and help of people of means, but we must not depend solely upon that, else will young people of genius be diverted by sheer force of circumstance into other channels, and our nascent science will lose the benefit of their powers and continuous work.

I have had the pleasure of communicating, to the Annual General Meeting of the Society this afternoon, the fact that a few friends who desire to remain anonymous have started an endowment fund in order to achieve this object, in order to set the Society upon a sound financial basis, and in order to provide the material means of attacking the problems which the future may bring before us. Member A has given us £750, member B £250, the Society has transferred £1000 from the legacy of Dr. Arthur Myers, and a trust deed has been drawn up and approved by the Council, whereby the Society accepts these donations and others which we hope may be forthcoming,<sup>1</sup> and determines to accumulate them until the sum of £8000 at least has been reached, or until a certain specified time elapses, whichever event happens first. As soon as a *minimum* capital sum of £8000 has been attained, it will be permissible to offer a Research Scholarship in Psychical Science, to which a holder irrespective of sex or nationality may be appointed for one year, and from year to year as may seem good, his or her time to be devoted to the work of psychical investigation.

If we had more means more might be done; a much-

<sup>1</sup> A legacy of £3805 has since been left to the Society by Mr. A. N. Aksakoff.



needed laboratory, with special appliances such as I foreshadowed some years ago, might be erected; but this is to be the beginning. This is not an appeal to people to increase or supplement their subscriptions, such as was recently issued, in order to meet our ordinary working expenses and enable us to employ an Organising Secretary and to take what I think you will agree with me in calling improved offices. The need for ordinary subscriptions and new members continues, and it should be clearly represented to all persons interested in our work that we should welcome them if they will join the Society, and that we apply no test save the test of sympathy and sanity. But the movement I now report has new and additional objects: it is the establishment of an endowment fund to place the Society on a sound and permanent basis and enable it before long to begin prosecuting its work with greater ardour, and especially with greater regularity.

We cannot always depend on spontaneous cases alone. They are most important and are often extremely valuable instances of a spontaneous and purposeful exercise of the faculty we are investigating, and it would be a great mistake to suppose that we have had enough of them. It is essential that we be kept informed of recent well-attested cases, especially of apparitions at or near the time of death; but we shall not make progress in understanding the laws of the phenomena and in disentangling their deeper meaning if we confine ourselves to observation alone. We must experiment, we must endeavour to produce and examine phenomena as it were in a laboratory and submit them to minute investigation.

For instance there is the question of so-called spirit photography, there are asserted levitations and *apports* and physical movements, none of which have been subjected to adequate scientific examination; many such cases have been examined and found fraudulent, and there is great difficulty in obtaining the phenomena under prescribed and crucial conditions; but until these things have been submitted to long-continued scientific scrutiny they will make no undisputed impression, they will be either improperly accepted or improperly rejected, and will continue in that nebulous hazy region, the region of popular superstition, from which it is the

business of this Society to rescue them: raising them on to the dry land of science, or submerging them as impostures in the waters of oblivion. And I may say parenthetically that we do not care one iota which alternative fate is in store for them: we only want the truth.

Now I know that some few of our members are impatient of such an investigation and decline to see any need for it. They feel that if they have evidence enough to justify their own belief, further enquiry is superfluous.

These have not the scientific spirit, they do not understand the meaning of "law." A fact isolated and alone, joined by no link to the general body of knowledge, is almost valueless. If what they believe is really a fact, they may depend upon it that it has its place in the cosmic scheme, a place which can be detected by human intelligence; and its whole bearing and meaning can gradually be made out.

A still smaller class of persons may of course take the purely selfish view that what they have already learnt is sufficient for them, and they will help us no further. To such I do not speak, except to point out to them that their attitude is selfish. Real knowledge, like real wealth of any kind, cannot be wrapped up thus, it pines for reproduction, for increase: "how am I straightened till it be accomplished"; the missionary spirit, in some form or other, is inseparably associated with all true and worthy knowledge. Think of a man who, having made a discovery in Astronomy,—seen a new planet, or worked out a new law,—should keep it to himself and gloat over it in private. It would be inhuman and detestable miserliness; even in a thing like that of no manifest importance to mankind. The only excuse would be if he lived so much in advance of his time that, like Galileo with his newly invented and applied telescope, he received nothing but rebuffs and persecution for the publication of his discoveries. But even so, it is his business to brave this and tell out what he knows; still more is it his business so to act upon the mind of his generation as to convert it gradually to the truth, and lead his fellows to accept what now they reject.

Those who believe themselves the repositories of any form of divine truth should realise their responsibility. They are

bound in honour to take such steps as may wisely cause its perception and recognition by the mass of mankind. They are not bound to harangue the crowd from the nearest platform: that might be the very way to retard progress and throw back the acceptance of their doctrine. The course to pursue may be much more indirect than that. The way may be hard and long, but to the possessor of worldly means it is far easier than to another. If the proper administration of his means can conduce to the progress of science, and to the acceptance by the mass of mankind of important and vivifying knowledge of which they are now ignorant, then surely the path lies plain.

The inauguration of this endowment fund, of which I announce a nucleus to-day, makes it possible and easy for persons without leisure, but with means and enlightenment, to assist their fellows by ensuring a continuation and extension of investigation into the more unconscious and less recognised mental operations.

But still it will be asked, Why investigate further when we are already convinced? of telepathy for instance,—it may be said,—you yourself are convinced of that. Why do you want us to conduct experiments in that? Hypnotism again: An excellent paper was read a few weeks ago to the Society on certain aspects of hypnotism; but hypnotism is an accepted medical fact. Why waste time in making further experiments on its manner and its bearing?

Alas, here again the effect of the lack of scientific education in the schools of England is painfully prominent. Effective knowledge concerning anything can only be the result of long-continued investigation, and belief in the possibility of a fact is only the very first step. Until there is some sort of tentative belief in the reasonable possibility of a fact there is no investigation,—the scientific priest and Levite have other business, and pass by on the other side. And small blame to them: they cannot stop to investigate everything that may be lying by the roadside. If they had been sure that it was a fellow creature in legitimate distress they would have acted differently. Belief of a tentative kind will ensure investigation, not by all but by some of the scientific travellers along the road; but investigation is

the prelude to action, and action is a long process. Some one must attend to the whole case and see it through. Others, more pressed for time, may find it easier to subscribe their two pence to an endowment fund, and so give indirect but valuable assistance.

But once more the question is reiterated, Why investigate that of which we are sure? Why seek to confirm that of which we already have conviction? Why value well-evidenced narratives for instance of apparitions at times of death or catastrophe, when so many have already been collected in *Phantasms of the Living*, and when careful scrutiny by Mrs. Sidgwick proved that they could not be the result of chance coincidence?<sup>1</sup> There is a quite definite answer to this question, which I wish to commend to the consideration of those who feel this difficulty or ask this sort of question.

The business of science is not belief but investigation. Belief is both the prelude to and the outcome of knowledge. If a fact or a theory has had a *prima facie* case made out for it, subsequent investigation is necessary to examine and extend it.

The object of investigation is the ascertainment of law, and to this process there is no end. What, for instance, is the object of observing and recording earthquakes, and arranging delicate instruments to detect the slightest indication of earth tremor? Every one knows that earthquakes exist, there is no scepticism to overcome in their case; even people who have never experienced them are quite ready to believe in their occurrence. Investigation into earthquakes and the whole of the motile occurrences in the earth's crust, is not in the least for the purpose of confirming faith, but solely for the better understanding of the conditions and nature of the phenomena; in other words, for the ascertainment of law.

So it is in every branch of science. At first among new phenomena careful observation of fact is necessary, as when Tycho Brahe made measurements of the motion of the planets and accumulated a store of careful observations. Then came

<sup>1</sup> See the Report of Professor Sidgwick's Committee, *Proceedings* S.P.R., Vol. x. p. 394.

the era of hypothesis, and Kepler waded through guess after guess, testing them pertinaciously to see if any one of them would fit all the facts: the result of his strenuous life-work being the three great laws which for all time bear his name. And then came the majestic deductive epoch of Newton, welding the whole into one comprehensive system; subsequently to be enriched and extended by the labours of Lagrange and Laplace; after which the current of scientific enquiry was diverted for a time into other less adequately explored channels.

For not at all times is everything equally ripe for enquiry. There is a phase, or it may be a fashion, even in science. I spoke of geographical exploration as the feature of Elizabeth's time. Astronomical enquiry succeeded it. Optics and Chemistry were the dominating sciences of the early part of the nineteenth century, Heat and Geology of the middle, Electricity and Biology of the later portion. Not yet has our branch of psychology had its phase of popularity; nor am I anxious that it should be universally fashionable. It is a subject of special interest, and therefore perhaps of special danger. In that respect it is like other studies of the operations of mind, like a scientific enumeration of the phenomena of religion for instance, like the study of anything which in its early stages looks mysterious and incomprehensible. Training and some admixture of other studies are necessary for its healthy investigation. The day will come when the science will put off its foggy aspect, bewildering to the novice, and become easier for the less well-balanced and more ordinarily-equipped explorer. At present it is like a mountain shrouded in mist whose sides offer but little secure foothold, where climbing, though possible, is difficult and dangerous.

As a Society we exist to curb rash and inexperienced novices, and to support trusted and experienced climbers by roping ourselves together so that we may advance safely and in unison, guarding ourselves from foolhardy enterprises, but facing such legitimate difficulties as lie in our path, and resolved that, weather and uncontrollable circumstances permitting, our exploration shall continue, and the truth, whatever it may be, be ascertained.



The assuring ourselves as to facts is one of our duties, and it is better to hesitate too long over a truth than to welcome an error, for a false gleam may lead us far astray unless it is soon detected.

Another of our duties is the making and testing of hypotheses, so as gradually to make a map of the district and be able to explain it to future travellers. We have to combine the labours of Tycho with those of Kepler, and thus prepare the way for a future Newton; who has not yet appeared above the psychical horizon.

His advent must depend upon how far we of this and the next few generations are faithful to our trust, how far we work ourselves, and by our pecuniary means enable others to work; and I call upon those who are simultaneously blessed with this world's goods and likewise inspired with confidence in the truth and value of mental and spiritual knowledge, to bethink themselves whether, either in their lifetime or in their wills, they cannot contribute to the world's progress in a beneficent way, so as to enable humanity to rise to a greater height of aspiration and even of religion; as they will if they are enabled to start with a substantial foundation of solid scientific fact on which to erect their edifice of faith.

If it be said, but why should investigation be expensive? I would ask you to look round and think what is expended on the investigation of the orthodox sciences. Before Columbus' voyage could be undertaken, the Courts of Europe had to be appealed to for funds. Before astronomical discoveries can be made, large observatories and costly telescopes have to be provided; and not one only, but many, so that by collaboration of observers in many parts of the world the truth may be ascertained.

Look at the expense of biological and ethnological exploration to-day. Think of the highly equipped physical laboratories, one of which is maintained at every College or University in the civilised world. And of chemical laboratories,—remember that every large commercial chemical manufacturing firm in Germany maintains a band of trained and competent chemists, always investigating, in the hope of a new compound or a new process or some little profitable improvement.

Money is not scarce, and if people realised the interest of science to the human race it would be poured out far more lavishly than it is at present. Certain small special sums are now provided for the investigation of disease. The origin of Malaria has been traced, and this disease has some chance of being exterminated, so that the tropical belt of the earth may become open to white habitation. Cancer is being pursued to its lair, without success so far; but funds for researches such as these are bound to be forthcoming. I read in the papers only this week a magnificent donation for the purpose of investigating cancer, a large portion of a million, attributed to Mr. Rockefeller, founder of Chicago University.

That is the scale on which to do things with effect. When practical benefits can be definitely foreseen, people feel justified in spending money even on Science; though as a rule that and education are things on which they are specially economical. Municipal extravagance in any such things as those is sternly checked, though in other directions it is permitted.

And why should not psychical investigation lead to practical results? Are we satisfied with our treatment of criminals? Are we as civilised people content to grow a perennial class of habitual criminals, and to keep them in check only by devices appropriate to savages; hunting them, flogging them, locking them up, exterminating them? Any savage race in the history of the world could do as much as that: and if they know no better they are bound to do it for their own protection. Society cannot let its malefactors run wild, any more than it can release its lunatics. Till it understands these things it *must* lock them up, but the sooner it understands them the better; an attempt at comprehension is being made by criminologists in Italy, France,<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere. Force is no remedy: intelligent treatment is. Who can doubt but that a study of obscure mental facts will lead to a theory of the habitual criminal, to the tracing of his malady as surely as malaria has been traced to the mosquito? And once we understand the evil the remedy will follow. Already hypnotic treatment, or treatment by suggestion, occurs to one. The fact of imprisonment ought to lend itself to brilliant attempts at reform. It is a

<sup>1</sup> *E.g. Bulletin de l'Institut Général Psychologique*, dirigé par Dr. Pierre Janet; Décembre 1902, p. 225.

great advantage to doctors to have their patients collected compactly in a hospital; and without it medical practice would languish. It ought to be a similar advantage to have criminals herded together in gaols, and lunatics in asylums. It is unwise and unscientific to leave prisoners merely to the discipline of warders and to the preaching of chaplains. That is not the way to attack a disease of the body politic. I have no full-blown treatment to suggest, but I foresee that there will be one in the future. Society will not be content always to pursue these methods of barbarism; the resources of civilisation are not really exhausted, though for centuries they have appeared to be. The criminal demands careful study on the psychical side, and remedy or palliation will be a direct outcome of one aspect of our researches. The influence of the unconscious or subliminal self, the power of suggestion, the influence of one mind over another, the phenomena of so-called 'possession,' these are not academic or scientific facts alone: they have a deep practical bearing, and sooner or later it must be put to the proof.

One of the things I want to impress upon all Members and Associates and beg them to spread, wherever they have any influence, among persons who being supernormally gifted may expect to experience facts and sensations worth recording, is that too much care cannot be expended in getting the statements exact. Exact in every particular, especially as regards the matter of *time*. In recording a vision or an audition or some other impression corresponding to some event elsewhere, there is a horrible tendency to try to coax the facts to fit some half-fledged preconceived theory and to make the coincidence in point of time exact.

Such distortions of truth are misleading and useless. What we want to know is exactly how the things occurred, not how the impressionist would have liked them to occur, or how he thinks they ought to have occurred. If people attach any importance to their own predilection concerning events in the Universe, they can set them forth in a footnote for the guidance of any one who hereafter may think of starting a Universe on his own account: but such speculations are of no interest to us who wish to study and understand the

Universe as it is. If the event preceded the impression, by all means let us know it, and perhaps some one may be able to detect some meaning in the time-interval, when a great number of similar instances are compared hereafter. If the impression preceded the event, by all means let us know that too, and never let the observation be suppressed from a ridiculous idea that such anticipation is impossible. Nor let us exclude attested physical phenomena from a historical record, on any similar ground of impossibility. We want to *learn* what is possible, not to have our minds made up beforehand and distort or blink the facts to suit.

If the correspondence in time is exact, then let future students be able to ascertain that also from the record; but let not the recorder make any remark about "allowing for difference of longitude" or anything of that kind, unless indeed he is an astronomer or some one who thoroughly understands all about "time." Arithmetic of that sort can be left to those who subsequently disentangle and criticise the results. The observer may of course amuse himself in that and other ways privately, but nothing of it should appear in the record. That should be accurate and cold-blooded and precise. Sentences indicating contemporary emotion, in so far as that is part of the facts to be recorded, are entirely in place; but ejaculations of subsequent emotion, speculation as to the cause, or moralisation as to the meaning, are out of place. It may be said that these do no harm, and can easily be ignored by a future student; and that is so in one sense, but their atmosphere is rather apt to spoil the record, to put the recorder into an unscientific frame of mind, and, even when they have biassed him no whit, to suggest to a subsequent reader that they may have biassed him, and so discount unfairly the value of his record.

With respect to the important subject of possible prediction, on which our ideas as to the ultimate nature of time will so largely depend, every precaution should be taken to put far from us the temptation or the possibility of improving the original record after the fact to which it refers has occurred, if it ever does occur; and to remember that though we have done nothing of the sort, and are in all respects honest, and known to be honest and truthful, yet the

contrary may be surmised by posterity or by strangers or foreigners who did not know us; and even our friends may fancy that we did more than we were aware of, in some access of somnambule or automatic trance. Automatic writers for instance must be assumed open to this suspicion, unless they take proper precautions and deposit copies of their writings in some inaccessible and responsible custody; because the essence of their phenomena is that the hand writes what they themselves are not aware of, and so it is an easy step for cautious critics to maintain that it may also have written *when* they were not aware of it.

The establishment of cases of real prediction, not mere inference, is so vital and crucial a test of something not yet recognised by science that it is worth every effort to make its evidence secure.

Another thing on which I should value experiments is the detection of slight traces of telepathic power in quite normal persons, in the average man for instance, or rather more likely perhaps, in the average child. The power of receiving telepathic impressions *may* be a rare faculty existing only in a few individuals and in them fully developed; but it is equally possible, and, if one may say so, more likely, that what we see in them is but an intensification of a power which exists in every one as a germ or nucleus. If such should be the fact, it behoves us to know it; and its recognition would do more to spread a general belief in the fact of telepathy—a belief by no means as yet universally or even widely spread—than almost anything else.

The method that has been suggested is to offer to a percipient the choice of one out of two things, and to see whether in multitudes of events the predetermination of a bystander as to which shall be chosen, exerts any influence whatever on the result. Many devices can be made for carrying this out, but experiments of greater interest and novelty will be made if the devices are left to individual ingenuity and experience. Leisure, and patience, and system, and industry, are the requisites: and if I do not myself practise what I preach, in this and other particulars, it is because whatever I may lack of the others I am at present conspicuously lacking in the first of these essentials.

There are many topics on which I might speak: one is the recent advance in our knowledge of the nature of the atom of matter, and the discovery of facts which one would think must have some bearing,—some to me at present quite unknown bearing,—on the theory of what are called physical phenomena; but I am speaking on this subject in the summer at Oxford in the Romanes lecture,—I mean the subject of the nature of matter, not its bearing upon our researches, for on the latter I have at present no useful ideas,—so I will not mention it further here and now, except to call the attention of all educated persons to the intense interest of this most recent purely scientific subject.

On another topic I might say a few words; viz., on the ambiguity clinging round the phrase “action at a distance,” in connection with telepathy. Physicists deny action at a distance, at least most of them do. I do for one. At the same time I admit telepathy. Therefore it is supposed I necessarily assume that telepathy must be conducted by an etherial process analogous to the transmission of waves. That is however a *non-sequitur*. The phrase “action at a distance” is a technical one. It signifies that no physical force is exerted save through a medium. There must either be a projectile from A to B, or a continuous medium of some kind extending from A to B, if A exerts force upon B, or otherwise influences it by a physical process.

But what about a psychical process? There is no such word in physics; the term is in that connection meaningless. A physicist can make no assertion on it one way or the other. If A mesmerises B, or if A makes an apparition of himself appear to B, or if A conveys a telepathic impression to B; is a medium necessary then? As a physicist I do not know: these are not processes I understand. They may not be physical processes at all.

Take it further: A thinks of B, or A prays to B, or A worships B;—is a medium necessary for these things? Absolute ignorance! The question is probably meaningless and absurd. Spiritual and psychical events do not enter into the scheme of Physics, and when a physicist denies “action at a distance” he is speaking of things he is

competent to deal with,—of light and sound and electricity and magnetism and cohesion and gravitation. He is not, or should not be, denying anything psychical or spiritual at all. All the physical things, he asserts, necessitate a medium; but beyond that he is silent. If telepathy is an etherial process, as soon as it is proved to be an etherial process, it will come into the realm of physics; but till then it stays outside.

There are rash speculators who presume to say that spiritual and psychical and physical are all one. To me it seems that the instinct for simplification has run away with them, that they are trespassing out of bounds and preaching what they do not know, eking out a precarious ignorance with cheap dogmatism.

I find I have omitted to say anything on one topic at which I hinted in an earlier portion of my Address, viz., the bearing of our enquiry on religion. It is a large subject and one too nearly trenching on the region of emotion to be altogether suitable for the consideration of a scientific Society. Yet every science has its practical applications, and though they are not part of the science, they are its legitimate outcome, and the value of the science to humanity must be measured in the last resort by the use which humanity can make of it. To the enthusiast, science for the sake of knowledge, without ulterior ends, may be enough,—and if there were none of this spirit in the world we should be poorer than we are;—but for the bulk of mankind this is too high or too arid a creed, and people in general must see just enough outcome to have faith that there may be yet more.

That our researches will ultimately have some bearing, some meaning, for the science of Theology, I do not doubt. What that bearing may be I cannot tell. I have indicated in an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for January part of what I feel on the subject, and I have gone as far in that article as I feel entitled to go. We seek to unravel the nature and hidden powers of man; and a fuller understanding of the attributes of humanity cannot but have some influence on our theory of Divinity itself.

If any scientific Society is worthy of encouragement and support it should surely be this. If there is any object worthy the patient and continued attention of humanity, it is surely these great and pressing problems of *whence, what,* and *whither*, that have occupied the attention of Prophet and Philosopher since time was. The discovery of a new star, or of a marking on Mars, or of a new element, or of a new extinct animal or plant, is interesting: surely the discovery of a new human faculty is interesting too. Already the discovery of "telepathy" constitutes the first-fruits of this Society's work, and it has laid the way open to the discovery of much more. Its aim is nothing less than the investigation and better comprehension of human faculty, human personality, and human destiny.



## SUPPLEMENT.

REVIEWS.

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*Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death.* By FREDERIC W. H. MYERS. 2 vols. 8vo. (Longmans, Green & Co., London, New York, and Bombay. 1903.)

## I.

Such large portions of the text of these bulky volumes, which are the legacy of Myers's literary life, have already appeared in these *Proceedings*, and their author's general conceptions are so familiar to my readers, that I feel free to omit from this notice all detailed account of the book's contents and composition. For aught I know such an account may be given by my fellow-reviewers. The contents are so intricate and the ideas so many that the great danger is that of not seeing the forest for the trees, and of not apprehending with distinctness the steps of Myers's reasoning. It seems to me wisest, therefore, to employ the opportunity accorded me in analysing his argument into its essential features, following, as I do so, a logical rather than a textual order.

What would entitle Myers, if he were successful in what he attempted, to be regarded as the founder of a new science is that conception of the Subliminal Self, by which he colligated and co-ordinated a mass of phenomena which had never before been considered together, and thus made a sort of objective continuum of what, before him, had appeared so pure a disconnectedness that the ordinary scientific mind had either disdained to look at it, or pronounced it mostly fictitious. Two years ago I wrote in these *Proceedings* that Myers had endowed psychology with a new problem—*The exploration of the subliminal region* being destined to figure hereafter in that branch of learning as "Myers's problem." Reading these

volumes, we gain a definite idea of how far he himself had pushed forward the topographical survey of that region.

Conservatives in anthropologic science will immediately say that Myers used the concept of the "subliminal" far too broadly, and that the only safe demarcation of the term is that of the neuropathologists. These observers for the most part now recognise a subliminal region frankly, but they recognise it only as a dissociated part of the normal personality. Experiences forgotten by the upper consciousness may here still lead a parasitic existence, and in an inferior, dreamlike way may interfere with normal processes. For these critics the subliminal is synonymous with the *forgotten* and forms a region of disintegration exclusively.

Most neurologists either ignore those other "evolutive," "superior," or "supernormal" phenomena, in which Myers's chief interest lay, or scout them wholesale as deceptions. The few who admit them are more likely to see in them another department of experience altogether than to treat them as having continuous connection with the ordinary phenomena of mental dissociation.

Those who simply ignore them (for whatever reason) may themselves be ignored here as belated students. However acutely aware one may be of the sources of fallacy in reports of the marvellous, I fail to see how the records quoted in these volumes, and in vastly greater profusion in Gurney's *Phantasms of the Living* and the other S.P.R. publications, can rightfully be met by a wholesale and indiscriminating *non possumus*. Any one with a healthy sense for evidence, a sense not methodically blunted by the sectarianism of "Science," ought now, it seems to me, to feel that exalted sensibilities and memories, veridical phantasms, haunted houses, trances with supernormal faculty, and even experimental thought-transference, are natural kinds of phenomenon which ought, just like other natural events, to be followed up with scientific curiosity.

Hypnotic phenomena form the centre of perspective for Myers's map of the subliminal region. In the first place, the system of faculty of a subject under hypnosis is quite different from his waking system of faculty. While portions of the usual waking system are inhibited, other portions are sometimes supernormally energised in hypnosis, producing not only hallucinations, but after-results in the way of sense-discrimination and control of organic function, to which the waking consciousness is unable to attain. We are thus led to the notion of two different currents of mental life, one deeper, and the other shallower, of which either is best appealed to while the

other is in abeyance. That these currents may not only alternate but may co-exist with each other is proved by Gurney's, Binet's, and Janet's discovery of Subjects who, receiving suggestions during hypnosis and forgetting them when wakened, nevertheless then wrote them out automatically and unconsciously as soon as a pencil was placed in their hands.

Allying the curative phenomena of hypnosis with the great reparative powers of sleep, and its enhancements of faculty with the enhancements of faculty to which dreaming and natural somnambulism occasionally give rise, Myers postulates a region of sleeping consciousness present at all times in all of us, a region moreover which in certain respects has an advantage over the waking levels of the mind. This subliminal region is usually closed off from the ordinary waking consciousness, but under special conditions of appeal, which vary with the idiosyncrasy of the individual, it may break in with effects which reveal its presence to us. The popular word "suggestion" is only a name for a successful appeal to this subliminal consciousness.

The appeal, in hypnotic subjects, is made through the ordinary consciousness in the first instance; and into that consciousness the effects, when they are "post-hypnotic," return in the form of "automatisms," sensory or motor. In other words, hallucinations or unmotivated impulses to act, which in some cases are upheavals from the subliminal into the supraliminal region, may be so in all cases. The two regions thus form environments for each other, with possibilities of interaction, though under ordinary conditions their intercourse is small.

So far Myers would seem to be on perfectly solid ground. There is a subliminal region of life which opens fitfully into the supraliminal region. The only doubt is as to whether it be general in human beings, or whether it be not limited to a few hypnotic and hysteric subjects.

The subliminal region being thus established as an actuality, the next question is as to its farther limits, where it exists. My subliminal, for instance, has my ordinary consciousness for one of its environments, but has it additional environments on the remoter side? Has it direct relations of intercourse, for example, with the consciousness, subliminal or supraliminal, of other men?

Some of the phenomena of hypnotism or mesmerism suggest that this is actually the case. I refer to the reports (several of them irreproachably recorded) of hypnotism at a distance, of obedience to

spoken orders, and of "community of sensation" between hypnotiser and subject, of which Sections 568 to 571 of Myers's Volume I. give some account. Remote influences, to which the supraliminal region is closed, may thus occasionally pass into the subliminal region, showing that this latter communicates not only with the supraliminal mind of the subject himself, but with the mind of other persons, and possibly with a still wider world.

How wide this world may possibly be is suggested by all the various reports of thought-transference and clairvoyance in the hypnotic state. And if we now pass beyond conditions of artificial hypnosis, and take into account states of abstraction like those produced in some persons by crystal gazing and by automatic writing, and the "trances" of certain somnambulists and mediums, with the clairvoyant faculty reported to be found therein, we find ourselves obliged (if we credit the reports) to assume that the subliminal life has windows of outlook and doors of ingress which bring it (in some persons at least) into a commerce, of which the channels entirely escape our observation, with an indefinitely extended region of the world of truth.

The jump which Myers makes here is that of generalising his conclusions. The "conservative" critic who does not deny the facts *in toto* would most probably call them pathological freaks of idiosyncrasy. He would protest against their being treated as revelations of the constitution of human nature at large. Myers, on the other hand, regards them as such revelations, and considers that the subjects show their "idiosyncrasy" rather in lying as open as they do to our observation, than in having the kind of human constitution which the observations disclose.

He is thus led to the general conception of a subliminal life belonging to human nature in general, and having its own indefinitely wide environment, distinct from that with which our bodily senses carry on their commerce. Set over against this subliminal life, and in strong contrast with it, we find the normal consciousness, dealing primarily through the senses with the material world, and in possession of faculties of attention, and in particular of memory, which are pitifully small in comparison with those which the subliminal consciousness wields. The normal consciousness is thus only a portion of our nature, adapted primarily to "terrene" conditions. Those more directly intuitive faculties which it lacks, and of which we get glimpses in individuals whose subliminal lies exceptionally open, can hardly be vestiges, degenerations of something which our

ancestors once possessed. We should rather regard them as germs of something not yet evolved for methodical use in our natural environment, but possibly even now carrying on a set of active functions in their own wider "cosmic" environment.

The "supernormal" becomes thus for Myers synonymous with the "evolutive" as contrasted with the "dissolutive" with which the ordinary neurologist would prefer to connect it. The supernormal faculties of the subliminal take us into the cosmic environment; and for Myers this cosmic environment takes on more and more, as the volumes proceed, the character of a "spiritual world." From its intercourse with this spiritual world the subliminal self of each of us may draw strength, and communicate it to the supraliminal life. The "energising of life" seems, in fact, to be one of its functions. The reparativeness of sleep, the curative effects of self-suggestion, the "uprushing" inspirations of genius, the regenerative influences of prayer and of religious self-surrender, the strength of belief which mystical experiences give, are all ascribed by Myers to the "dynamogeny" of the spiritual world, upon which we are enabled to make drafts of power by virtue of our connection with our subliminal. He dreams of a methodical evolution and extension, as our knowledge of the channels shall improve, of our resources in this direction.

Myers's theory, so far, is simple enough. It only postulates an indefinite inward extension of our being, cut off from common consciousness by a screen or diaphragm not absolutely impervious but liable to leakage and to occasional rupture. The "scientific" critic can only say it is a pity that so vast and vaguely defined a hypothesis should be reared upon a set of facts so few and so imperfectly ascertained.

The vagueness of the hypothesis at this point chiefly consists in the ill-defined relations of the subliminal with its "cosmic" environment. Is this latter the Absolute Soul of the World, with which all our subliminals may be supposed to be substantially continuous? Or are the various subliminals discontinuous?—and is their intercourse transacted across an isolating interval?

As the work proceeds, Myers tends more and more towards the latter conception: the "spiritual world" becomes a "world of spirits" which interact.

This follows naturally from the consideration, to which he next proceeds, of veridical phantasms and mediumistic messages. At first sight "ghosts," etc., (if admitted to be actual phenomena) would seem to require a physical rather than a mental hypothesis for their

explanation; and mediumistic messages, if taken at their face value, suggest that the "controlling" spirit intrudes into the very organism of the medium rather than that it merely actuates the medium's subliminal mind. The plot thickens very much hereabouts, and obliges one to ask more definitely whether the environment of the subliminal be mental exclusively or whether it may not also be physical. Myers is shy of putting forth psychophysical hypotheses, but in his conceptions of "phantasmogenetic invasion" of space and of "telegergy" and "telekinesis," we find that he is forced to abandon purely mental territory. Subliminal selves, affecting one another in their quality of purely psychic entities, are not the sole factors that need be considered in our explanations. Space and their physical relations to space are also required.

Let me indicate very briefly what are the essential points in Myers's handling of this new range of experiences.

In the first place, take the so-called "veridical phantasms of the living." Assuming them to be established by the evidence, the records show that the mind of the percipient must be at least one of the factors of their production. If they were purely physical or "astral" presences, why should they wear earthly clothes, and carry earthly accessories? and when the percipient is in the midst of companions, why should they so seldom appear to *them*?

Evidently the phantasm, whatever may be its remoter starting-point, involves, as a mere immediate bit of experience, the psychophysical process called "hallucination" on the part of the percipient himself.

Secondly, since there are well recorded cases where a living person, A, made his phantasm appear to B by simply willing that it should do so, and since in many of the other cases of phantasms of the living, the person who appeared probably *wished* to appear where he did appear, it seems fair to interpret these appearances generally as hallucinations produced by the action of one mind upon another, somewhat after the pattern of the hallucinations which a hypnotiser makes his subject experience so easily by suggesting that he shall have them, either during the hypnosis or after waking up. "Telepathy" is the name which Myers gave to the immediate influence of one subliminal upon another. The records seem to prove that telepathy either may or may not be a transfer of ready-made content from one mind to another. Sometimes the influencing mind appears to act only as a suggestive stimulus, and the results on the mind influenced show every variation from a vague emotional mood to an

elaborated perception full of accessories, or to an automatically impulsive act.

*Activity of the influencing mind at a distance from its body is at any rate proved, according to Myers, by these phantasms of the living and by other telepathic phenomena.*

It is round this conception of action at a distance, to which Myers applies the term of "psychical invasion," that his theory now turns towards its ulterior developments.

The fact that a phantasm may appear to a whole collection of persons at once, or to an indifferent companion of the person, rather than to the person himself of whom the phantasm's original might reasonably be supposed to be thinking, suggests that our soul's invasive powers apply to outer space as well as to other minds. Myers cites examples of these, as of all other special types of case which his argument requires, and considers that the probability of this space-invasion by the subliminal powers of the living is strengthened by two additional kinds of fact. First we have cases of apparent "bilocation" of mind and organism, as when a living person appears to view his own body from a remote position, or to see his own "double" as a phantasm; and second, we have an impressive array of cases which make for "travelling" clairvoyance, ("telæsthesia," as Myers calls it) whether in dream, in crystal gazing, or in the mesmeric trance. Myers indulges in no hypothesis whatever as to the *modus operandi* of this space-invasion by our subliminal. At any rate it seems to bring space in as a portion of the subliminal's environment. The subliminal has relations with space as well as with other minds.

So far the powers of living persons have been considered exclusively. But phantasms of the slowly or suddenly dying shade by continuity of time-relation into phantasms of the recently dead, and these in turn shade into phantasms of the long dead, *i.e.* into narratives of the haunted-house type, of which the mass recorded is decidedly imposing.

The order of theoretic construction, if we go back to the beginning, is thus somewhat as follows:—From hyperæsthesia in the hypnotic state we pass gradually into telepathy between the subject and the operator; from this to phantasmogenetic telepathy between living men at a distance from one another; from this to space-invasions, whether phantasmogenetic or clairvoyant, by the subliminal of living persons; and finally from this to similar invasions (phantasmogenetic, at any rate) by the dead. We thus reach the hypothesis of spirit survival. Primarily, we reach this only in the somewhat idiotic form of "ghosts,"

for up to this point we have been considering only what Myers calls automatisms of the *sensory* order.

But *motor* automatisms carry us a good deal further towards a "world of spirits." Sensory automatisms seem to be essentially fugacious. Rarely is their content elaborately developed or prolonged. It is quite otherwise with automatic writing and speech, for here the messages are consecutive, and bring explicit professions of origin and purpose along with them. This may obtain when the subject who offers them is awake as well as when he is entranced.

The whole topic of "spirit messages" is thus opened up to our reflection. Although Myers died before he could write out his review of the evidence for spirit messages in detail, he all along shows that he deemed it sufficient: some such messages, at any rate, he held to have been proved authentic. With this our "cosmic" environment, as he believed in it, comes into full view. Our subliminals surround one another and act upon one another, as well as upon space; and spirits of the departed (which may themselves be constituted as we are, and have something like a subliminal condition of their own) may also act upon us and upon space, and receive our action too. When the action is transient, it is probably merely an impact upon our subliminal, of which we need not necessarily suspect the source. When it is more protracted or "invasive," space gets affected, and we either see a ghost or feel a presence; and it is an open question, in such effects as these upon our consciousness, how far our subliminal mind exclusively receives the operation of the invader, and how far he may act directly on our physical nervous system. Prolonged "possession" or "control" of the organism seems to involve the profoundest sort of operation which is possible; and Myers is willing here to admit that the foreign spirit may directly actuate the medium's nervous system.

That spirits of departed men should actuate these living bodies of ours directly, shows a form of physical influence to which Myers gives the name of *telekinesis*, and of which still other instances would be the raps, the table-movings without contact, and the other "physical phenomena of mediumship," as they are commonly termed. Myers discusses these phenomena warily, using delicate methods of gradual approach (see especially the exquisitely ingenious "Scheme of Vital Faculty," which ought to have been prominently printed as the concluding chapter of the whole book, but which appears inconspicuously among the Appendices as Section 926 A, Vol. II.,



pp. 505-554). On the whole he seems well disposed to treat the evidence for physical phenomena as adequate.

And now his whole theory lies before us. It is a vast synthesis, but a coherent one, notwithstanding the vagueness of some of the terms that figure in it. No one of the dots by which his map is plotted out, no one of the "corners" required by his triangulation, is purely hypothetical. He offers empirical evidence for the concrete existence of every element which his scheme postulates and works with. In logical form the theory is thus a scientific construction of a very high order, against which one can urge only two general kinds of objection. One can say first that the stepping-stones themselves, the corners, are too frail, that the types of fact invoked need much additional corroboration; or one can say, even if the kinds of facts were admitted to be solid where they have been observed, that Myers has ascribed a universality and an extension to them for which he has no warrant, that he has drawn his rules from the exceptional cases, and made his spiritual universe too continuous.

Disregarding these criticisms for the moment, I am impelled to say a word about this matter of Myers's "scientific" ability. Reading him afresh in these two volumes, I find myself filled with an admiration which almost surprises me. The work, whatever weaknesses it may have, strikes me as at least a masterpiece of co-ordination and unification. The voluminous arsenal of "cases" of which the author's memory disposes might make the most erudite naturalist or historian envy him, and his delicate power of serially assorting his facts, so as to find always just the case he needs to fit into a gap in the scheme, is wholly admirable. He shows indeed a genius not unlike that of Charles Darwin for discovering shadings and transitions, and grading down discontinuities in his argument.

Three circumstances, probably, have worked against the general public recognition of Myers's scientific powers. These have been, first, the nature of the material he worked in; second, his literary fluency; and third, his emotional interest in immortality. The two latter characteristics, combining their effects, have given to certain passages in the present volumes a tone so lyrical that it may well make them distasteful to the ordinary scientific reader. For propagandist purposes the existence of these passages is, I think, to be regretted. Myers could well have afforded (having shown his undisputed lyrical power elsewhere) to be dryer in this argument, and by being so he would have doubtless turned certain possible disciples, now lost to him, into respectful listeners. But he so habitually saw

the meanest subliminal phenomena in the light of that transterrene world with which they might remotely be connected, that they became glorified in his mind into experiences in themselves majestic. All his materials were objects of love to him, and the richly latinized and hellenized vocabulary in which he spoke of them shows how they affected his imagination.

From this point of view I think we need not regret a feature of these volumes which to some persons may have seemed pathetic. Myers, namely, was cut off by death before he could write his direct discussion of the evidence for spirit-return. But that discussion is a matter of dry-as-dust detail which may well be left to the pages of our *Proceedings* and *Journal*, and to workers who are not such universal geniuses. He has fully expressed in this book his general position on the subject ; and being so lyrical a fountain in the direction of immortality, he could hardly have embarked on the evidence without alienating still more a class of students whose sympathy may on the whole be precious. Even though the cap-stone of the work, as he projected it, be lacking, still the essential Myers is in it, for it is as the organiser and co-ordinator, far more than as the critic of this or that particular set of observations, that posterity will best remember him.

As regards the truth of his theory, as contra-distinguished from its formal merits as a constructive effort, it is certainly too early for any one to pass dogmatic judgment. Most readers, even those who admire the scheme as a whole, will doubtless shrink from yielding their credence to it unreservedly. It will seem like skating over ice too thin for any intellect less nimble than Myers's to place its feet on boldly. The types of case which he uses as stepping stones are some of them, at present, either in quality or quantity, decidedly weak supports for the weight which the theory would rest upon them, and it remains at least possible that future records may not remedy this frailty.

The reproach that he has over-generalized the exceptional is also one which, in the present state of our knowledge, cannot be decidedly rebutted. He may extend the subliminal too far when he supposes that all of us possess it, and that works of genius generally have their source in it. He may extend "phantasms" too far when he fills a whole cosmic environment with spirits able to engender them. As between the individual subliminal and the cosmic environment, he may also not have drawn the boundary correctly. There may well be more of the "dissolutive" subliminal and less of the

"spirit" than he supposes, in some of his palmary phenomena. But however it may have to be contracted in one case, or extended in another, the subliminal region, as Myers conceived it, will remain a *vera causa* in psychology, explanatory, either of the whole or of a part, of the great mass of occult occurrences so far as they are authentic. "Automatisms" are indeed what he first said they were, messages from the subliminal to the supraliminal regions.

The imperfection which I feel most acutely in Myers's survey of the subliminal life is its failure adequately to account for its being so impartially the home both of evolutive and of dissolutive phenomena. The parasitic ideas of psycho-neurosis, and the fictitious personations of planchette-writing and mediumship reside there side by side with the inspirations of genius, with the faculties of telepathy and telæsthesia, and with the susceptibility of genuine spirit-control. Myers felt the paradoxical character of such cohabitation, and, as usual, was ready with a suggestion for attenuating the difficulty.

"It may be expected," he writes, "that supernormal vital phenomena will manifest themselves as far as possible through the same channels as abnormal or morbid vital phenomena, when the same centres or the same synergies are used. . . . If there be within us a secondary self aiming at manifestation by physiological means, it seems probable that its readiest path of externalisation—its readiest outlet of visible action—may often lie along some track which has already been shown to be a line of low resistance by the disintegrating processes of disease, . . . lie along some plane of cleavage which the morbid dissociations of our psychical synergies have already shown themselves disposed to follow" (Vol. II., p. 84).

But this conception is deficient in clearness. Are there three zones of subliminal life, of which the innermost is *dissolutive*, the middle one *superior* (the zone of genius, telepathy, etc.), and the outermost *supreme* and receptive directly of the impact of the spirit-world? And can the two latter zones reach the supraliminal consciousness only by passing through the interior and inferior zone, and consequently using its channels and mixing its morbid effects with their own? Or is the subliminal superior throughout when considered in itself, and are the curious parasitisms of hysteria and alternate personality, and the curious uncritical passivity to the absurdest suggestions which we observe in hypnosis to be explained by defective brain-action exclusively, without bringing in the subliminal mind? Is it the brain, in short, which vitiates and mixes results, or is it the interior zone of the subliminal

mind? I make no attempt to solve the question.<sup>1</sup> It is practically as well as theoretically a vital one, for there can be no doubt whatever that the *great* obstacle to the reception of a *Wellanschauung* like Myers's is that the superior phenomena which it believes in are so enveloped and smothered in the mass of their degenerative congeners and accompaniments that they beget a collective impression of disgust, and that only the strongest of mental stomachs can pick them over and seek the gold amongst the rubbish.

Meanwhile it must not be forgotten, if one finds Myers's map unsatisfactory, that no regular psychologist has ever tried his hand at the problem. Psychologists admit a subliminal life to exist in hypnosis and in hysteria, and they use a case like that of Janet's "Adrienne" to explain the manner in which "secondary personalities" may become organised. But the existence all about us of thousands and of tens of thousands of persons, not perceptibly hysteric or unhealthy, who are mediumistic to the degree at any rate of being automatic writers, and whose mediumism results in these grotesque impersonations, this, I say, is a phenomenon of human life which they do not even attempt to connect with any of the other facts of Nature. Add the fact that the mediumship often gives supernormal information, and it becomes evident that the phenomenon cannot consist of pure eccentricity and isolation. There is method in it; it must have a context of some sort and belong to a region where other things can be found also. It cries aloud for serious investigation. Myers's map is the only scientifically serious investigation that has yet been offered. It is to be hoped that those whom it dissatisfies may not merely reject it, but also make some effort to provide something better.

I cannot conclude without paying my tribute to the innumerable felicities of suggestion with which *Human Personality* abounds. Myers's urbanity of style, and his genius for analogy were never more profusely displayed, or in so many directions. Bold as his theory is, it is one of its merits that it should be so sober in the way of either physical or metaphysical hypothesis. What "spirits" are, or what their relations are to "space," he never tries to say, but uses the terms like a *Naturforscher*, as mere designations for factors of phenomena. The book on the whole must be considered a worthy monument to his memory.

WILLIAM JAMES.

<sup>1</sup> For Mr. Myers's treatment of the question, see especially Vol. I., pp. 72-75.—EDITOR.

## II.

MR. MYERS' great conception of the subliminal self has been adopted, explained, parodied, and paraded, by several writers, usually in the garbled and misleading form that man has a dual nature or duplex soul, that sometimes the more usual, and sometimes the less usual aspect of his personality comes to the front and influences his actions and thoughts. In the form of a contest between two rival principles, this idea is extremely old; and in the form of a divided soul or bifurcated personality, a version of the conception has been elaborated by Mr. Thomson Jay Hudson in an ambitious book extensively read in America called *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*,<sup>1</sup> wherein it is sought to explain everything, from the Christian miracles downwards, by a crudely stated hypothesis of duplex personality or a double soul: an idea which seems to have been borrowed, without acknowledgment, from Mr. Myers' papers in the *Proceedings*, and spoiled in the borrowing.

And in a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Mallock, getting hold apparently of this version of Mr. Hudson's, has skillfully set it forth as if it were an explanation or summary of Mr. Myers' own theory; and has pointed a flippant finger of scorn at the triviality of the evidence, and at the futility of a life-work which has this conclusion for its result. Few essays which bear a superficial resemblance to the truth could readily be more misleading or less illuminating than this article of Mr. Mallock's, and I am content to caution any student not to accept that ostensible summary as giving any adequate or true idea of Mr. Myers' comprehensive treatise.

The doctrine which Mr. Myers arrived at after years of study is that each individual as we perceive him is but a small fraction of a larger whole, is as it were the foliage of a tree which has its main trunk and its roots in another order of existence; but that on this dark inconspicuous and permanent basis, now one and now

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed in *Proceedings* S.P.R., Vol. IX. p. 230.

another system of leaves bud, grow, display themselves, wither, and decay, while the great trunk and roots persist through many such temporary appearances, not independently of the sensible manifestations, nor unassisted by them, but supporting them, dominating them, reproducing them, assimilating their nourishment in the form of the elaborated sap called experience, and thereby growing continually into a more perfect and larger whole. Many metaphors could be suggested, but this is the one which occurs to me now, and it carries us a certain distance.

As the tree periodically buds and blossoms into an aerial life, so we bud and blossom in a terrestrial life, clothing ourselves with material particles for a time, assimilating and utilising the sunshine and the dew, realising the existence and the neighbourhood of other organisms in a like stage of development, and joyfully availing ourselves of the consequences that flow from proximity and contemporaneous specialised existence.

The mystery of incarnation and of gradual development, of the persistence of existence beyond bodily death and decay, and even some glimmerings of the possible meaning of the vague dream of so-called re-incarnation, all become in some sort intelligible on a basis of this kind—the basis of a full and never wholly manifested persistent self, from which periodically sprouts a terrestrial manifestation, though never twice the same. Each terrestrial appearance flourishes and assimilates mental and moral nutriment for a time, and the result of each is incorporated in the constant and growing memory of the underlying, supporting, but inconspicuously manifesting, and at present barely recognised, fundamental self.

And whereas we, the visible manifestations, exposed to sun and air, can signal to each other and receive impressions through rays of light and sound and heat, our transcendental portions with roots in another order of being must be supposed capable of communication too; they are individualised but not isolated, being welded into the framework of things in such way as to receive nutriment from subterranean moisture and from dying relics of the past, even from things which to the aerial portion seem useless or noxious; and they may thus send up to the leaves strange streamings of sap laden with the common wealth of mother earth.

The metaphor constantly breaks down, as all metaphors must sooner or later; for some purposes it would seem better that the tree should be inverted; and the adjective “subliminal” contains no reference to what is beneath, except in the sense of foundation

and support; in every other aspect the subliminal is probably the more real and more noble, more comprehensive, more intelligent, self, of which the supraliminal development is but a natural and healthy and partial manifestation.

The products of the subliminal are to be regarded as "higher," in a definite sense, than those of the supraliminal. The supraliminal is that which is the outcome of terrestrial evolution, and so is able to manifest itself in a planetary manner; the subliminal has a cosmic existence, which may play a part in terrestrial evolution hereafter, but at present only shows signs of doing so, as, for instance, in the supernormal uprushes which are known as the inspirations of genius; signs which may be taken as anticipatory of the course of evolution in the future.

In this way sleep, death, genius, insanity, hysteria, hypnotism, automatism, clairvoyance, and all other disintegrations, abnormalities, and supernormalities of personality, fall into a consistent comprehensive scheme; and it is the object of the book to elaborate this hypothesis and to unify all these strange features of human personality, features which have so long afforded an exercise alternately to resolute credulity and to blatant scepticism, and have so perennially perplexed mankind.

It may be that in this my brief summary and metaphorical representation of the chief theoretical conclusion or unifying principle of the book I too am guilty of a parody; but I am writing for members of the Society, who will surely take the trouble to read the book itself and not be put off with any brief account or compressed record of the work of what they know to have been an industrious lifetime. The book has been editorially prepared by a student for students, and is provided with syllabuses giving a conspectus of the contents of each chapter, which may be valuable for reference and study after the chapter has been read. It is also provided with a glossary of terms and a copious index. For the student the book is well adapted; for the general reader its arrangement is troublesome, because each chapter and almost each section of each chapter has a detached appendix as long as itself placed further on in the book; and in order to read continuously constant turning over pages is necessary. If the illustrative cases had been incorporated with the text, it would have been easy for those pressed for time to skim them, whereas the tendency now is to skip them altogether from their proper place, and read them, if at all, subsequently in an indigestible mass.

Another feature of the book, against which many persons have rebelled, is the comparative smallness of the type and over-transparency of the paper: necessitated probably by the bulk of material, which otherwise would have run into three volumes. On these trivial heads I say no more.

The book begins with an explanatory and properly prosaic Introduction, and closes with a more poetic Epilogue.

Successive chapters deal with the following subjects:

First. Disintegration of personality, such as Multiple personality, and other hysterical and pathological cases.

Second. Genius, which is one of the most illuminating and brilliant chapters in the book, where the man of genius so far from being regarded as afflicted with any form of nascent insanity is regarded as the standard or norm of the race—a product of a higher stage of evolution than the average man has yet attained.

Clearly a genius is one who can draw more than others on his central and sustaining subliminal organisation, one who can breathe out products obtained not from sun and air alone, but from roots driven deep into the heart of the universe: one whose existence is not planetary merely, but cosmic, and in whom subliminal uprushes of fructifying sap are frequent.

The next chapter deals with sleep, or the state when the supra-liminal activities are dormant: when the sun has ceased to awaken full activities, when the whole self is more massed together and partially withdrawn from its active planetary existence; and when by dreams and visions some reminiscence of a wider though dimmer purview can sometimes be retained for a time and carried over into the waking or terrestrially conscious existence.

This leads up to the chapter which deals with the artificial or experimental induction of this state, the chapter on Hypnotism; a process whereby the deeper strata of personality can be reached, and suggestion and other influences implanted, which may subsequently bear fruit in waking life. One may liken this to gardening operations, such as grafting and manuring and other systems of treatment, applied not to the leaves or flowers of a tree direct, but to its branches and roots; operations which nevertheless influence those leaves and flowers in a subsequent and unmistakable manner.

The chapter on Sensory Automatism deals with those conditions of hallucination of the senses under which clairvoyance or pseudo-sense-impressions of various kinds are generated: furnishing avenues whereby telepathy, crystal vision, and other perceptions, not received



through the normal organs of sense but by some ill-understood subliminal reaction, become possible.

And chapter viii. in the second volume, on Motor Automatism, expands this same region into the muscular or efferent output of the same kind of faculty;—resulting in automatic writing, and other physical manifestations of subliminal activity, whether of the nature of inhibition or of propulsion, up to such strenuously active but subliminally guided lives, as for instance those of Socrates and Joan of Arc. Between these two is interpolated a chapter on Phantasms of the Dead: those hallucinatory appearances or visions of departed persons, which are here treated as an example of sensory automatism on the part of the percipient, excited however in many cases veridically by external influence, and capable of conveying real information.

And the chapter on Motor Automatism is similarly followed by a chapter on the developed form of the same, viz. a chapter headed “Trance, Possession, Ecstasy,” in which certain well-known cases of veridical trance utterance are partially included, though with many serious omissions, due to the recent occurrence of some of the cases, so that insufficient time had been afforded for their complete digestion and for a final decision as to their place and purport. This, together with sensory and motor automatisms, may be regarded as the part of the subject-matter which has attracted most popular attention, and the part which when stated by itself seems to excite nothing but scepticism on the one hand and superstition on the other. It was Mr. Myers’ plan to so gradually build or lead up to these strange phenomena that when reached they should be realised as a fitting and natural consequence of what had gone before, leaving them no longer as an inaccessible or aerial structure without foundation, but as the upper storey of a large and lofty building through which a fairly sound staircase had been constructed.

Myers’ life-work either achieves this unification or it does not. If it does, this book, as I suggested last January in my Presidential Address to the Society, will stand as a *Novum Organon* in psychical science. If it does not, it may mean either that the attempt is impossible, or that it still remains for some future pioneer to achieve that which for the present generation has turned out too difficult.

Myers himself took a modest, but I think hopeful, view of his labours. He must have felt, at any rate his friends felt for him, that by the industry of himself and Gurney and the other founders of the

Society, he had, amassed and ready to his hands, a fund of material to draw upon, such as no philosopher or psychologist had ever had before ; and although he himself would have seriously deprecated any comparison with the sages of the past, some of us felt that, building on their foundation, utilising their work, and fortified with such a vast mass of modern information, aided also by his classical learning and by a great natural scientific insight, with the opportunity of consulting many scientific men, some hostile, some sympathetic to his researches, and with the nineteenth century of science behind him, gifted also with considerable leisure, persistent enthusiasm, and industry, he was a man supremely fitted to push back the barriers of ignorance in this region farther than had been accomplished before, and to give to the human race an insight into the hidden faculties and destiny of man such as not even the gigantic genius of Plato, nor the profound insight of Kant had been able to bestow.

It is not a matter on which an opinion of mine would be of value, nor would I be understood as expressing one, but the glorious sense of having accomplished a work worthy of the serious attention of humanity has blossomed in an Epilogue where the cosmic import and religious significance of the whole vista of human faculty is eloquently set forth. And this specially written epilogue is happily completed and supplemented by his one Presidential Address to the Society, an address which will be in the memory of many readers ; and this is further supplemented by two short essays, one on the "Decline of Dogmatism," wherein the ultimate upshot of the messages which claim to come from another order of existence are briefly summarised, and another on "Prayer and Supplication," regarded from the illuminating point of view of the telepathic law. From this last I extract the following quotation :—

"In the law of telepathy, developing into the law of spiritual intercommunication between incarnate and discarnate spirits, we see dimly adumbrated before our eyes the highest law with which our human science can conceivably have to deal. The discovery of telepathy opens before us a potential communication between all life. And if, as our present evidence indicates, this telepathic intercourse can subsist between embodied and disembodied souls, that law must needs lie at the very centre of cosmic evolution. It will be evolutionary, as depending on a faculty now in actual course of development. It will be cosmic ; for it may—it almost *must*—by analogy subsist not on this planet only, but wherever in the universe discarnate and incarnate spirits may be intermingled or juxtaposed."

One other portion of the book must be mentioned, for it was a

laborious attempt at a synthesis or conspectus of the whole, viz., his "Scheme of Vital Faculty"—sadly buried by the arrangement of the book between pages 505 and 555 of the second volume—a scheme wherein the usual orthodox view of the tripartite nature of man is utilised, and each vital faculty is displayed under the aspect appropriate to the three heads, somatic, psychic, and pneumatic; or, as he styles them, supraliminal, subliminal, and spiritual. The scheme was the result of a great deal of thought, but it is open to question in many points of detail, and Myers would have been the last to insist that each subject is classified precisely in the most appropriate manner, or that it always fits the niche provided for it. At the same time it would be well for future students to realise that Myers had a reason for his system of classification, and that though it may be changed, it is worthy of being changed not lightly, but after due consideration.

How far such a scheme as this soars above the range of the orthodox science of to-day is apparent from the fact that few of the faculties catalogued and classified in it, beyond those in the first category, are as yet generally recognised as existing at all. A few from the second or middle category are coming into recognition—such as suggestion, hyperæsthesia, psycho-therapeutics, and telepathy—but the greater part even of this second list is still only on the outskirts of recognised knowledge; while in Myers' view it is the third and at present wholly ultra-scientific category which lies in the path of future knowledge and development, and constitutes the most pregnant portion of his message to mankind.

It is not to be claimed for a moment that these volumes will convince a reader of the survival of personality beyond bodily death, if he was previously hostile to or otherwise fortified against such an idea. Perhaps they will convince nobody: I see no reason why they should. The main object of the book is not edification and finality, but stimulation to enquiry; and convictions of any value are seldom attained by mere reading: they can only be formed by soaking one's mind in a subject for years, by "continually thinking unto it," as Newton said. As the outcome of such a process it became Myers' undoubted belief that intelligence and human personality persist beyond bodily death; and that, between the two states or conditions of being, intercommunication though extremely difficult was not altogether impossible. But this conclusion of his has been popularly seized and over-emphasised till to many contemporaries it seems that an easy credulity on this point was his

characteristic attitude. Nothing could be further from the truth. Easy credulity does not lead to a life-long labour and evolution of a comprehensive scheme such as this. To those who have not been through it, the assured conviction which was the outcome of his long training may seem like easy credulity; just as the physicist is often twitted for believing in the reality of an "ether," which to the onlooker is a mere hypothesis—a blank form to be filled up arbitrarily at pleasure, and with no more reality than the figment of a dream.

This is one of those cases, and there are several, where the onlooker does not see most of the game, where the man in the street with all his conspicuous ability is not an ultimate authority, and where the profound gibes of the clubs, or of a monthly magazine, are not the conclusion of the whole matter.

For people who are immersed in such an atmosphere it is difficult to realise the strenuously-acquired full-bodied certitude, or the clear-visioned perception and what one can hardly help calling, in some sense, knowledge, whether it be concerning the "ether" or concerning the problem of what is known as human "immortality," which may be possessed by a specifically trained man of science. That is the position in which the author of these two volumes seems to me definitely to have acquired the right to range himself; and in this estimate of his position I believe that scientific posterity will acclaim agreement. It is by the name of Man of Science that I wish to hail our late chief and leader, Frederic Myers.

OLIVER LODGE.

## III.

L'OUVRAGE posthume de Fréd. Myers constitue un monument si vaste et d'une telle richesse qu'il serait téméraire de le juger sur une première et hâtive lecture. Ce n'est pas au lendemain de sa publication que l'on peut en apprécier tous les détails et mesurer sa portée réelle : il y faut un certain temps d'accoutumance, de réflexion, et, pour dire le mot, de digestion subliminale. Aussi me bornerai-je ici à quelques remarques générales, qui n'ont que la valeur d'impressions purement personnelles, dénuées de toute prétention au complet ou au définitif.

(I.) Le premier point qui me frappe dans cet ouvrage est sa tendance mixte, à la fois scientifique et religieuse. Le but prochain de Myers est d'instituer une *science* nouvelle, consacrée à la démonstration expérimentale de l'existence et de la survivance de l'âme ; mais c'est en vue d'un but lointain, supérieur, à savoir la fondation d'une nouvelle *religion*, dont le contenu, quintessence de ce qu'il y a de mieux dans le triple courant du christianisme, du bouddhisme, et de la sagesse antique, reposera cette fois sur la connaissance et non plus, comme par le passé, sur la simple croyance. En soi cette entreprise n'est pas neuve, puisque l'idée d'une synthèse religieuse définitive, basée sur l'expérimentation scientifique au lieu de la foi, appartient en commun à toutes les sectes modernes de théosophie et de spiritisme. Ce qui fait la puissante originalité de Myers, c'est la façon dont il en a tenté et poursuivi la réalisation, c'est l'étendue de ses connaissances, la hardiesse de ses hypothèses alliée à son sens pénétrant des méthodes rigoureuses, en un mot la profondeur et la solidité de son génie scientifique, qui ne le cèdent en rien à celles de son enthousiasme religieux. Que l'on compare son ouvrage à ceux d'Allan Kardec ou de tels autres écrivains français récents de la même école : l'intention première et la tournure d'esprit, je dirai la mentalité fondamentale, est identique, mais il y a la même différence dans l'exécution qu'entre la hutte du sauvage et l'édifice d'un grand architecte, et l'on s'étonne qu'il n'y ait que l'écart de

quelques années ou de quelques lieues entre des œuvres qui semblent séparées par des milliers de siècles.

Mais pour en revenir à cette mentalité même, qui aspire à l'indissoluble fusion de la Science et de la Religion, celle-ci reposant sur celle-là, j'avoue qu'elle me laisse perplexe. Je me sens disqualifié pour l'apprécier. Personnellement en effet, je me suis trop profondément pénétré aux jours de ma jeunesse de la distinction kantienne entre le "Glauben" et le "Wissen" (sans doute parce qu'elle répondait à ma nature congénitale) pour pouvoir m'en affranchir aujourd'hui et me couler dans le moule opposé. J'ai beau avoir depuis longtemps oublié le détail des catégories et le système compliqué du philosophe de Königsberg, mon cerveau ou ma conscience subliminale n'en conservent pas moins, comme un pli indélébile, son inspiration foncière d'une hétérogénéité irréductible entre le *croire*, attitude essentiellement personnelle et morale, fondée sur des sentiments de valeur, à l'endroit des suprêmes réalités inaccessible à la raison discursive,—et le *savoir*, organisation des phénomènes dans les formes indifférentes, amORALES, impersonnelles, de la pensée scientifique. Je ne prétends pas que cette sorte de dualisme soit préférable en soi à la position unitaire si brillamment représentée par Myers; je dis seulement que, relevant de deux types psychologiques ou de deux mentalités différentes, chacun de ces points de vue est bien difficile à comprendre, et impossible à juger équitablement, par ceux qui n'y sont pas adaptés.

Les natures comme Myers éprouvent évidemment un profond malaise tant qu'elles n'ont pas réussi à transformer les postulats de leur raison pratique (pour parler comme Kant)—la vie future, l'existence de Dieu, la réalité du Devoir, la communion finale des âmes, l'efficacité de la prière, etc.—en vérités d'ordre scientifique, objectivement démontrables à l'égal de la rotation de la terre ou de la loi de Mariotte. C'est un malaise inverse, mais pareillement profond, que j'éprouve de mon côté en voyant suspendre ces mêmes croyances, vitales et essentielles pour moi, au fil ténu d'une recherche de pathologie, d'une enquête statistique ou d'une séance de médium. Il me semble que c'est porter atteinte aux ressorts les plus intimes de mon être, que de les exposer ainsi à tous les risques, en les rendant solidaires d'interprétations ou de résultats scientifiques tenus aujourd'hui pour acquis, et demain peut-être renversés. Des goûts et des couleurs on ne peut discuter, et pas davantage de la confiance qu'inspirent à l'individu les diverses voies qu'on lui propose pour atteindre le Réel, saisir la Vérité, asseoir sa vie morale ou sa foi

religieuse. Il est bien entendu, je le répète, que tout ceci ne renferme aucune espèce de critique ou de blâme à l'endroit de Myers. Je constate simplement que je ne suis pas fait comme lui, voilà tout; mais je songe d'autant moins à lui jeter la pierre, que j'ai rencontré autour de moi une foule de gens partageant (sans le connaître) sa manière de sentir, sa soif inextinguible de certitude scientifique en matière religieuse, son ardent besoin d'une démonstration expérimentale et tangible de la vie future, etc. Et comme en définitive l'essentiel est que tout le monde soit content, je souhaite que l'avenir lui donne raison, pour le bonheur de tant d'âmes tourmentées à qui la garantie de la science, appliquée comme un poinçon sur leurs aspirations intimes, rendrait aussitôt la joie et la paix—sans aucun inconvénient d'ailleurs pour ceux que ne tiennent pas, ou ne se fient pas, à cette estampille officielle.

(II.) Les croyances et l'attitude religieuses visent au bout du compte le fond des choses, l'énigme suprême, le dernier mot de l'univers et de la vie. Pour placer ces fonctions de notre être moral sous la juridiction de la science expérimentale et appeler celle-ci à prononcer en dernier ressort sur de pareilles questions, il faut avoir en elle une confiance quasi-absolue, et ne pas s'embarrasser des petites querelles que les philosophes lui ont faites sur sa portée véritable. Aussi n'y a-t-il pas à s'étonner si l'un des traits caractéristiques de Myers est son indifférence pour les problèmes de métaphysique, ou de critique de la connaissance, agités par les penseurs de ces derniers siècles. Toutes les difficultés du commerce de l'âme et du corps, les questions relatives au réalisme et à l'idéalisme, à l'existence du monde matériel, aux conditions et limites de validité de notre connaissance, etc., Myers les passe résolument sous silence. L'histoire de la philosophie moderne n'existe pas pour lui. Amateur passionné de l'antiquité classique, il en cite volontiers les penseurs, surtout si ce furent des poètes, mais c'est vainement qu'on chercherait sous sa plume les noms de Descartes ou de Spinoza, de Hume ou de Berkeley, de Spencer ou de Renouvier. Leibnitz y est réduit à partager avec Hamilton une maigre note au bas de la page, et Kant lui-même n'apparaît guère, au cours de ces deux volumes, que comme historiographe de Swedenborg. Myers ignore jusqu'à Schopenhauer, dont le "Versuch über Geistersehen" avec la théorie du "Traumorgan" aurait pourtant pu lui fournir d'intéressants points d'attache pour sa doctrine des facultés subliminales. Il faut d'ailleurs lui rendre cette justice que s'il fait ainsi table rase de toute la grande tradition philosophique occidentale, il ne recourt

guère davantage à la littérature spirite ou occultiste de notre temps, sauf pour lui emprunter certaines observations de faits. C'est donc bien au pied de la lettre, et avec une parfaite conséquence, qu'il se donne pour le représentant de la "psychologie paléolithique" et que, sautant à pieds joints par dessus toutes les fortes têtes philosophiques de notre civilisation (à l'exception du seul Swedenborg), il va chercher ses vrais précurseurs dans "les humbles penseurs de l'âge de la pierre, les adeptes de la sorcellerie et du chamanisme." Tels sont bien les ancêtres dont il s'est donné pour tâche de remettre en honneur les conceptions oubliées, en leur apportant l'appoint inattendu et triomphant de tout le trésor d'hypothèses ou de faits accumulés par nos sciences expérimentales contemporaines. Car pour celles-ci, il les connaît admirablement, et il excelle à les faire servir à ses desseins, en leur empruntant, avec une habileté consommée tout ce qui peut venir à l'appui de ses vues, depuis les menues observations de la psychopathologie jusqu'aux théories biologiques de l'évolution et aux petits démons de Clerk Maxwell jouant avec les atomes.

Ici encore, il ne faut pas croire qu'en constatant ce goût exclusif de Myers pour les sciences positives et son magnifique dédain pour les problèmes de la philosophie moderne, je songe à lui en faire le moindre reproche. Bien au contraire; cette allure dégagée, cet affranchissement de tout préjugé d'école, cette *matter-of-factness* si l'on me passe le terme, me plaisent infiniment. Il y a quelque chose de piquant et de bienfaisant à voir un système carrément spiritualiste sortir—par la simple vertu des méthodes empiriques et de la logique du bon sens, mais maniées par un homme de génie—sortir, dis-je, de ces mêmes sciences naturelles et médicales d'où tant de bruyants vulgarisateurs ont cru pouvoir tirer des synthèses matérialistes et hostiles aux croyances séculaires de l'humanité. Et si l'œuvre de Myers a pour résultat final de faire un victorieux contrepoids à celle des Büchner, Haeckel et consorts, en les battant par leurs propres armes—c'est à dire sur le pur terrain du raisonnement expérimental, sans recourir aux subtilités de l'épistémologie,—elle aura pleinement rempli sa tâche dans l'histoire de la pensée humaine, et nul ne lui trouvera à redire d'avoir été droit au but en dédaignant les détours traditionnels de la critique philosophique.

(III.) Ceci m'amène à parler du noyau plus particulièrement scientifique de l'ouvrage de Myers, en laissant de côté sa philosophie religieuse (que je trouve d'ailleurs très élevée et pour laquelle j'éprouve la plus sympathique admiration). Abstraction faite des



Appendices, Glossaire, et autres pièces d'appui indispensables et du plus grand intérêt pour le lecteur, ce noyau consiste en huit chapitres formant deux groupes bien distincts. Les quatre premiers en effet (*Disintegrations of Personality; Genius; Sleep; Hypnotism*) traitent de faits couramment reconnus par la science contemporaine, mais auxquels Myers apporte une interprétation originale par sa doctrine proprement psychologique sur la constitution de la personnalité humaine. Les quatre derniers chapitres au contraire, qui lui servent plus spécialement de fondement pour sa démonstration de l'indépendance et de la survivance de l'âme, se meuvent dans des sphères qui sont encore vues d'un fort mauvais œil par la plupart des savants en renom. Il convient donc de suivre l'auteur sur ces deux terrains séparément.

Appliquée au premier domaine, la théorie *myersienne* de la Conscience Subliminale (assez connue pour que je me dispense de la résumer ici) me paraît extrêmement remarquable, et digne d'une sérieuse attention de la part des psychologues (même officiels et universitaires), par la merveilleuse souplesse avec laquelle elle se plie aux groupes de faits les plus divers, la clarté dont elle les illumine aussitôt, l'enchaînement et les relations inattendues qu'elle introduit entre eux, l'ordre systématique en un mot et l'intelligence qui, grâce à elle, jaillissent tout à coup de cette masse jusque-là chaotique et obscure de phénomènes plus ou moins étranges. Sans doute, sur bien des points elle dépasse notablement les données rigoureuses de l'observation, et parfois elle peut sembler aventureuse ou mystique dans sa manière de relier, de compléter et d'interpréter les phénomènes directement vérifiables. Mais c'est là un trait inévitable de toute théorie par opposition à la simple notation des faits bruts ; et la hardiesse d'une hypothèse doit lui être comptée comme une qualité plutôt que comme un défaut, quand les seules conséquences de cette hardiesse sont un élargissement de notre horizon, une intelligence plus complète et plus satisfaisante des données empiriques, un élan supérieur communiqué à la pensée et à la recherche. Or sous ces divers rapports la théorie de Myers présente deux ou trois marques d'excellence qui me semblent la mettre actuellement hors de pair (sans préjudice des améliorations qu'elle pourra subir ultérieurement).

(1°.) D'abord elle embrasse sous elle, comme un point de vue supérieur et plus compréhensif, une foule de théories analogues mais moins élaborées et ne cadrant chacune qu'avec un certain ordre restreint de faits. Le polypsychisme de Durand de Gros, le double-

moi de Dessoir, la désagrégation mentale de Janet, les états hypnoïdes de Breuer et Freud, l'être subconscient de Gyl, d'innombrables doctrines allemandes de l'inconscient et de non moins innombrables théories françaises du somnambulisme et de l'hypnose, tout cela semble n'être en somme que des ébauches préliminaires, des fragments, ou des échos déformés, de la doctrine même de Myers. Les historiens futurs pourront s'évertuer à faire le départ, dans ces communes analogies, entre ce que le psychologue anglais doit à ses devanciers ou à ses contemporains moins brillants que lui, et ce que maints de ces derniers lui ont au contraire emprunté, sciemment ou non, de son vivant; ce fait reste évident à mes yeux, que si l'idée de la Conscience Subliminale (par opposition au Moi simple des spiritualistes classiques et à la cérébration inconsciente des physiologistes étroits) flotte dans l'air depuis une ou deux générations et a percé simultanément, sous des formes diverses, dans l'esprit d'une foule de chercheurs, c'est cependant bien le génie de Myers, qui a donné à cette idée son expression actuellement la plus parfaite et la plus fouillée.

(2°.) Une preuve indirecte de la valeur et de la fécondité de la doctrine de Myers, c'est le trésor de comparaisons heureuses et de formules bien frappées qu'elle lui a suggérées, et qui, encore trop ignorées des spécialistes toujours lents à prendre en considération les travaux des amateurs, jouiront certainement d'une faveur croissante à mesure que son œuvre sera mieux connue. Je ne parle pas seulement des ingénieux néologismes, dont plusieurs sont déjà devenus courants, incorporés par Myers au vocabulaire psychologique, mais aussi des explications étonnamment simples et précises que sa théorie lui fournit pour des choses où tant de maîtres illustres pataugent encore à l'envi. Par exemple : l'hystérie, attribuée par Myers à "an undue permeability of the psychical diaphragm" entraînant un état de confusion dans les échanges entre la personnalité ordinaire et ses couches subconscientes plus ou moins malades; le génie, caractérisé par l'inspiration, c'est à dire "a subliminal uprush of helpful faculty"; la suggestion, à la fois éclairée et circonscrite par cette définition, qui est un vrai chef d'œuvre, "a successful appeal to the subliminal self," etc. Tout cela, objectera-t-on peut-être, ce sont des mots ou des images, non des réalités. Soit, mais comparez donc ces mots et ces images aux autres assemblages d'images et de mots dont se paient les auteurs en vogue, et vous verrez vite de quel côté se trouvent au plus haut degré la clarté jointe à la profondeur, l'exactitude dans

l'expression concise des faits en même temps que l'approche d'une explication réelle et satisfaisante. Il n'y a qu'à prendre par exemple les plus récentes théories françaises de l'hystérie<sup>1</sup> pour être frappé de voir combien toutes—à l'exception de celle de Janet, très proche parente de celle de Myers et psychologique comme elle—laissent au fond à désirer, en dépit de leurs fréquentes prétentions physiologiques, et sont encore rudimentaires à côté de la conception que la doctrine de la conscience subliminale permet déjà de se faire de cette névrose. C'est bien autre chose encore quand on aborde l'hypnotisme et la suggestion, et qu'on voit tant d'auteurs se perdre en discussions oiseuses, faute de connaître les idées et les définitions si claires de Myers.

(3°.) Sa théorie l'emporte sur toutes ses congénères, à ma connaissance, par son ampleur et le champ qu'elle laisse ouvert à des possibilités éventuelles non encore réalisées; en sorte que, même à ceux qui ne lui attribueraient aucune vérité en soi, elle offre du moins les avantages inappréciables d'un schéma suffisamment extensible pour embrasser, à l'occasion, nombre de faits nouveaux qui ne trouvent point de place dans les théories scientifiques courantes et qui y détonent comme des intrus dont on ne sait que faire. Je pourrais imaginer le cas, à tout le moins concevable, où la télépathie et la télékinésie venant à être mises hors de doute par des faits évidents et répétés, les cadres établis de la physiologie en seraient absolument disloqués, tandis que ces possibilités ont leur place déjà marquée, comme bien l'on sait, dans la théorie de Myers. Mais point n'est besoin d'aller si loin et d'inventer des circonstances encore imaginaires: il suffit de feuilleter la littérature médicale la plus récente pour y trouver, sous la plume d'auteurs fort peu suspects de mysticisme, deux exemples tout frais de ce que je veux dire. D'une part, des psychiatres français viennent de publier quelques cas d'aliénés ayant présenté, peu de jours avant leur fin, une amélioration aussi subite qu'inexplicable, en même temps que le pressentiment net de leur mort prochaine. D'autre part le fait, cité par tous les magnétiseurs depuis Puységur, de somnambules ayant la claire vision de leurs viscères, parfois jusque dans leur structure

<sup>1</sup>Exemples: Pour Bernheim, l'hystérie n'existe pas par elle-même, elle n'est que la réaction exagérée d'un appareil hystérogène particulièrement sensible.—Suivant Sollier, elle est un engourdissement cérébral, un sommeil dont il n'y a qu'à réveiller le malade pour le guérir.—D'après Babinsky, elle est un état où le sujet peut s'auto-suggestionner et dont tous les phénomènes peuvent être reproduits par suggestion et guéris par persuasion.—Etc.

intime, ce fait vient pour la première fois de franchir l'enceinte de la science sous le nom d'*autoscopie interne* ou *auto-représentation* de l'organisme; et par une amusante ironie du sort, les parrains de ce nouveau-venu—assurément très psychologique et subliminal—se trouvent être les tenants d'une école qui prétend rejeter toute explication psychologique de l'hystérie et veut définir cette névrose en purs termes de physiologie cérébrale! Je ne m'occupe pas ici de savoir si ces deux faits—prévision de la mort chez des aliénés, aperception intérieure des moindres détails de l'organisme chez des hystériques—sont réels et authentiques, ou le produit de la fumisterie et de la malobservation. Il me suffit de constater que, redécouverts ces derniers temps par des savants de la nuance la plus positive, ils trouvent aisément leur explication dans la théorie des facultés subliminales de Myers, tandis qu'ils dépassent et heurtent la physiologie traditionnelle pour le moins autant que l'anesthésie suggérée le faisait il y a soixante ans; et si les corps officiels aujourd'hui ne s'insurgent plus, comme alors, contre des nouveautés aussi incroyables, c'est que ceux-là même qui affichent encore en paroles un souverain mépris pour la psychologie subliminale, sont à leur insu déjà tout pénétrés de cette dernière, qu'ils ont respirée avec l'air du temps, et peuvent par conséquent être comptés comme des disciples malgré eux de la doctrine de Myers.

Si j'ajoute enfin que cette théorie, quoique élaborée spécialement sous la pression des faits anormaux ou morbides, s'applique également à la psychologie normale et permet d'en élucider beaucoup de phénomènes quotidiens (le jeu des souvenirs, etc.) mieux que dans bien d'autres doctrines classiques, j'en aurais assez dit pour justifier le cas que je fais de l'œuvre proprement scientifique de Myers. Il est grand temps que pathologistes et psychologues prennent enfin contact avec elle, et que, mettant de côté leurs préventions vieillottes contre tout ce qui vient des amateurs de "psychical research" indistinctement, ils se décident à étudier sérieusement la doctrine de la Conscience Subliminale chez son plus illustre représentant; non pas certes pour l'accepter aveuglément, mais afin de l'utiliser dans ce qu'elle a d'excellent et de profondément vrai, de l'amender en ses points faibles, et de l'adapter toujours mieux à la complexité des phénomènes.

(IV.) Pour ce qui est maintenant des quatre derniers chapitres (*Sensory automatism; Phantasms of the dead; Motor automatism; Trance, possession, and ecstasy*), ils roulent sur des sujets brûlants, qui seront probablement longtemps encore une pomme de discorde parmi les

chercheurs. Les faits que Myers a récoltés ou observés lui-même l'ont abondamment convaincu de la vérité foncière de l'antique croyance spirite, dont le seul énoncé a coutume de donner des crises épileptiques à la plupart de nos penseurs modernes, à moins qu'ils ne se contentent de se voiler la face ou de hausser les épaules. Tout bien réfléchi, je ne partage pas leur sentiment d'horreur ou de pitié ; le spiritisme, d'ailleurs très complexe et savamment élaboré de Myers, ne me paraît point devoir être nécessairement rejeté d'emblée pour l'unique raison qu'il est aux antipodes de nos habitudes scientifiques actuelles. En fait, notre psychologie, même physiologique, repose déjà sur une absurdité telle qu'on n'en saurait concevoir de pire : je veux parler de l'union des phénomènes de conscience et des phénomènes cérébraux. Qu'on la formule empiriquement comme un commerce réciproque, ou une liaison fonctionnelle quelconque, ou un simple parallélisme, elle est de toute façon inintelligible, et ne cesse pas de l'être lorsqu'on se réfugie dans les creuses métaphores du monisme, la théorie du double aspect, de l'unité à deux faces, du miroitement subjectif du neurocyme, etc. En sorte que cela n'aggrave guère la situation d'admettre, *si les faits le réclament*, que cette inconcevable union n'est pas à l'abri du divorce, et que ces mêmes phénomènes de conscience, que l'expérience ordinaire nous montre mystérieusement liés à des centres nerveux, peuvent s'en séparer momentanément ou définitivement sous forme de synthèses mnésiques, de personnalités psychiques, d'âmes survivantes, d'esprits désincarnés, peu importe le nom qu'on leur donne.

*Si les faits le réclament.* Toute la question est là ; malheureusement elle ne paraît pas encore près d'être résolue, et chacun en est réduit à se faire comme il peut, là-dessus, son opinion personnelle. La mienne, après avoir lu ces deux volumes, se trouve au même point qu'avant, c'est à dire d'une prudence et d'une sagesse tellement banales que j'ose à peine la formuler. Qu'il s'agisse de la télépathie (entendue au sens de Myers, comme influence purement psychique, sans le secours de vibrations intercérébrales), de la clairvoyance (télesthésie), de la précognition qui bouleverse nos idées courantes sur le temps, de la possession enfin ou envahissement de l'organisme d'un médium par les désincarnés, j'estime : (1°) que les preuves et raisonnements avancés par Myers en faveur de ces phénomènes supranormaux constituent, par leur nombre et leur poids, un dossier trop formidable pour qu'on puisse désormais l'ignorer, à moins de se boucher volontairement les yeux ; et que ce serait une folle niaiserie que de prétendre encore l'écarter en bloc sous le fallacieux prétexte que ces sujets

ne sont pas susceptibles d'être étudiées d'une manière scientifique. (2°) Que les conclusions de Myers ne ressortent pas de ce dossier avec une évidence telle, une nécessité si inéluctable, qu'on puisse doré et déjà les considérer comme hors de contestation. On me fera grâce, j'espère, des objections et discussions de détail ; il y faudrait un volume, et je suis d'ailleurs incompetent sur la pièce principale du dossier, celle que Myers considérerait lui-même comme décisive et où il voyait le couronnement de son édifice. Je veux naturellement parler des phénomènes de Mme Piper (et j'ajoute de Mme Thompson, qu'il est vraiment bien singulier de voir entièrement passée sous silence au cours de ces quatorze cents pages, quand on sait la place que ses séances ont tenue dans les dernières années de la vie de Myers et dans la formation de ses convictions sur l'authenticité du commerce spirite<sup>1</sup>). Sont-ce réellement les esprits des morts, ou tout au moins quelque segment de leur personnalité, qui viennent converser avec nous par l'intermédiaire des mediums intrancés ? Ou bien n'y aurait-il là que des apparences décevantes, dues à une subtile combinaison de l'imagination subconsciente, dont on ne connaît que trop la malice, avec la télépathie des vivants dont on ignore encore les limites ? Il ne faut pas être plus royaliste que le roi ; ce n'est point à moi, spectateur éloigné et imparfaitement renseigné, à me permettre une opinion arrêtée sur ces problèmes où le plus auguste aréopage, siégeant aux premières loges et suivant les choses de près, n'a pas encore réussi à rendre un verdict unanime. L'expectative patiente, et sans parti pris, est la seule attitude qui convienne en face des divergences d'interprétation qui séparaient même Myers et Mme Sidgwick (l'un étant pour la possession directe, l'autre pour la télépathie, de la part des désincarnés), et du désaccord plus fondamental encore qui subsiste entre des autorités telles que MM. Hyslop et Podmore, Hodgson et Lang, etc.

(V.) Je conclus. Nul ne peut prévoir le sort que l'avenir réserve à la doctrine spirite de Myers. Si les découvertes futures viennent à confirmer sa thèse de l'intervention empiriquement vérifiable des désincarnés dans la trame physique ou psychologique de notre monde phénoménal, alors son nom s'inscrira au livre d'or des grands initiateurs, et joint à ceux de Copernic et de Darwin, il y complétera la triade des génies ayant le plus profondément révolutionné la pensée scientifique dans l'ordre cosmologique, biologique, psychologique. Si au contraire le voile qu'il a essayé

<sup>1</sup> With regard to this point, see a statement in the *Journal S.P.R.* for May, 1903, p. 74.—EDITOR.

de soulever venait à retomber lourdement, et que les brillantes perspectives d'une *métaphysique expérimentale*, portant jusque dans l'Au-delà les procédés objectifs et impersonnels de la science, se trouvaient n'être qu'un mirage trompeur, une illusion d'optique par laquelle on aurait pris pour des révélations d'outre-tombe ce qui n'était en réalité que jeux enfantins, ou plaisanteries macabres, de consciences subliminales très incarnées et plus ou moins perverses ; si, en un mot, il fallait définitivement renoncer, non point à la survivance (qui est une toute autre affaire), mais à la démonstration scientifique de la survivance, alors ce serait l'effondrement du but vers lequel Myers avait fait converger tous ses efforts, et l'idée dominante de sa carrière n'aurait été qu'une utopie. Mais n'oublions pas que, dans ce cas encore, son œuvre proprement scientifique, bien loin de se trouver ruinée, subsisterait intacte et même d'une solidité d'autant plus évidente que c'est précisément en s'appuyant sur elle qu'on aurait fini par tirer les choses au clair. Il me paraît certain en effet que si jamais on réussit à dissiper les illusions et à découvrir la vérité dans ce mystérieux domaine des phénomènes occultes, ce ne sera qu'en continuant la voie même largement ouverte par Myers, je veux dire en poussant plus à fond cette investigation, dont il a été le propagateur par excellence, des fonctions cachées et des puissances intimes de notre être, et en achevant d'édifier cette Psychologie Subliminale à laquelle, quels qu'en soient les résultats, son nom restera glorieusement attaché.

TH. FLOURNOY.

## IV.

It is hard to know the best point of view from which to approach Myers's great work in writing for the Society for Psychical Research, in whose publications so large a part of *Human Personality* has already appeared, and to so many of whose members these pages will still bring with them the memory of the thrill of word and gesture with which their author used to vivify them as he poured them forth at our meetings in impetuous eloquence. It seems best, on the whole, that for our members the earlier portion of the book should be taken as known, and that no time should be spent on any criticism of the theory of the Subliminal Self, with which we are now so familiar. The evidential portion too may be taken for granted, the more so as what evidence is now for the first time published is not so extensive or so novel in character as to call for special discussion.

Myers's aim throughout was above all ethical; his life's task was to give such a scientific proof of a future life as should provide a dominating motive for the conduct of this life: and it is by this standard alone that he would have wished to be judged. I propose therefore to devote myself almost entirely to the later chapters in which he sums up his conclusions from this point of view, and to indicate exactly how far I find myself convinced, and where I have to leave him, being unable to follow the argument with him to his end. The whole question must be for every one of us eminently a personal one, and apologies are hardly called for if I endeavour to place a personal view on record where no general concord is to be expected for many years to come.

Unfortunately the portion of the book which is in this respect the most vital is precisely that which its author's death left incomplete, and we lack the final revision of the ultimate synthesis which we seek with the deepest interest from a mind so acute, so logical, and so strenuous. We have indeed much to be grateful for. In dealing with evidence which is at once disparate and



voluminous, the mere arrangement is not the least laborious, as it is perhaps the most responsible portion of the writer's task; and it is one for which Myers's special gifts admirably qualified him. The patience, the penetration, and the lucidity which he has brought to bear on it are above all praise, and his argument is marshalled and organised by a master's hand. Only the last deductions are left unfinished, and even here the argument is from the first so directed to a plain end that one can never doubt as to Myers's real opinion on any vital matter. Yet one may well hesitate to raise objections to which he may seem to have given too little weight; one may always fancy that so finished a dialectician had his answers in reserve, and might have found them a place in a completed work.

We have however a right to remember that, for all his real genius for scientific conceptions, Myers could not really approach this great subject with scientific detachment. He nowhere conceals his overwhelming desire that, in the highest interests of the human race, human personality should be proved to survive bodily death. The burning conviction that he holds in his hands this irrefutable proof fires his words with the enthusiasm of the prophet, while his desire to appeal to the reason of his contemporaries often imposes on him the stern restraint of the scientific treatise. The struggle between the two impulses is visible on every page of the book, and the skill with which they are fused is characteristic and admirable. But if Myers did not attain to detachment, neither can any critic hope to do the same; the matter is too vital for every man. However surely the evidence be established, it is still so dark in interpretation that every one will read in it that which he most wants to read. Let me therefore honestly say at once that I want to find in it something which Myers did not want, and that I find it accordingly.

With this confession let me express at once the effect which Myers's work produces upon me. It greatly weakens my sense of personality, to such an extent that I am rather less than more willing to believe that my personality will survive death, at least in any sense which can make such a belief a dominant motive for this life's work. This result is clearly not what Myers would have wished; and yet it seems to me to be the natural outcome of all his evidence. I follow him in the greater part at least of what he claims for the "subliminal Self" of the living; and then I have to ask, "can this subliminal self be called a part of my personality, in any sense in which such a belief will influence my life?" My

subliminal self is something of which I am not conscious. It does not appear to be governed exclusively by the moral laws which I take as my guide, or by the physical laws which control my body, and, through my brain, my consciousness. I am barely aware, through the experience of others, of its existence, and know nothing of the laws by which it can affect what I call "me," or "I" can affect it. It appears, so far as I can learn anything about it, to move in another world, which approaches marvellously near to the Infinite or the Absolute or the World Spirit or whatever we like to call it; at all events in a region where what we call Personality becomes void of all meaning.

Personality as conceived by the ordinary man—and this is the view which, for the present at least, is of real moral significance—has both a positive and a negative aspect. On the one hand it is based fundamentally on the continuous stream of memory, which carries with it too our hopes and aspirations for the future. On the negative side it is equally defined by its limitations—primarily by its clear separation from the other similar streams of memory which we conceive as co-existent, and call the personalities of other men. Normally we think of our personality as limited by our physical frame and its capacity for sense impressions, and cut off from other personalities by a line as hard and fast as that which divides our bodies from the rest of material nature. It is difficult for a man to think of his personality apart from his body; and it is no doubt this difficulty which leads to the conception of what St. Paul calls the "spiritual body" of the Resurrection. This spiritual body would I suppose in modern phrase be called a surviving personality, a boundary, that is, which shall in a future life keep our earthly memories together in a continuous stream with our discarnate memories, free from solution and absorption by any surrounding spiritual medium. And it is at any rate the existence of such a spiritual body that Myers sets himself to prove.

And yet it seems to me that the whole effect of his book is to shake and weaken every property of personality. He sets out with a striking chapter on Disintegrations of Personality, which at once shatters the natural, if somewhat crude idea of a man's self as a single stream of continuous memory in a single body. The stream is not continuous—it is subject to interruptions as capricious as they may be extensive. It is not single, for several streams, distinct and in some cases independent, may exist in the same body during its material life.

He then in subsequent chapters goes on to abolish the limitations which form the other elements in our conception of self. He conceives a secondary state in which the "spirit" can leave the body, and not only travel afar but actually modify spatial relations at a distance, so as to impress the sense-organs of other conscious persons. It may enter into their thoughts. It may even be independent of time, and become precognitive. It can in short take upon it some at least of the capacities which we usually associate with the "Absolute." And all of this—most of all the production of "collective hallucinations," for which the theory of space-modification seems to me to be a rather crude and unsatisfying hypothesis—to my mind reduces the notion of personality almost to vanishing point. Once more, it seems to take us into a region where personality becomes meaningless, because it loses its limitations, and, with its limitations, its unity.

And if this is the case with the incarnate spirit, how much more must we hesitate before we can ascribe to the discarnate the necessary boundaries which are required to constitute a personality. Of the discarnate spirit we only know for certain that if it does exist, it is without the most obvious bond which constituted it a separate unity. So far as there can be said to be any probabilities in such a matter, it would seem probable that the spirit emancipated from the body would extend those powers of the "secondary self" which appear to us as transcendental, and would enter into closer communion with kindred spirits, till the bounds of personality grew vaguer or even vanished.

This is however a question of evidence, if evidence can be obtained. And the ultimate object of Myers's work is to bring forward such evidence and interpret it. Let me say first that the evidence which he brings is relevant and of the highest importance. It seems to me to prove much, but not all that he claims. And I say at once that it does seem to me to prove that something of us does survive death. It seems to me to show that after the death of the body there remains a more or less coherent complex of memories which is accessible to the subliminal self of certain living persons. What I do not as yet see is that this complex has such coherence as can enable us to consider it a personality, or that it is bound up with such continuing vital processes as may justify us in holding that life in the spiritual world is continuous with life in this. The evidence seems to point rather to an alternative which at least is consistent with analogy, and demands

to be fully considered—that as the physical body only gradually dissolves into its elements after death, so the spiritual retains for a time a certain coherence which is no proof of life. Under certain circumstances the physical body may be preserved in a way which enables us to tell, it may be centuries after, how the living man appeared externally in the world. It is possible that the same may be the case with the spiritual. There may be a process of dissolution, varying perhaps greatly under conditions of which we know nothing; and it may be possible for peculiarly gifted living spirits to behold the gradually disintegrating spirit, and bring us word, with more or less completeness, of what the spiritual man was during life.

Even if we go no farther than this, we have made a gigantic step. At all events the great abyss has been bridged, and with a foot on the other shore we have the possibilities of unknown realms to explore. Even if we hesitate to follow, we cannot blame a man like Myers who, with courage and hope, would lead us into the new world. But we must claim for ourselves the right to be heard if we carefully examine our first footing before we take a second step.

It is practically on the evidence of Mrs. Piper that the whole case is founded. Our reports of her trance-communications are so full that all other evidence sinks unto unimportance compared to them, and can only be regarded as confirmatory and of the second degree. Even the note-books of Stainton Moses, as Myers freely admits, full as they are, do not offer anything like the same strength of testimony. It is then to Mrs. Piper that we must turn, and more particularly to the sittings of her second period, when she was under the control known as “George Pelham.” Let us see then what are the claims which Myers founds on these. They are so daring and startling that it is best to state them in his own words, which are clear and fearless enough.<sup>1</sup>

“The claim then is that the automatist, in the first place, falls into a trance, during which his spirit partially ‘quits his body’;—enters at any rate into a state in which the spiritual world is more or less open to his perception; and in which also—and this is the novelty—it so far ceases to occupy the organism as to leave room for an invading spirit to use it in somewhat the same fashion as the owner is accustomed to use it.

“The brain being thus left temporarily and partially uncontrolled,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II. p. 190.

a disembodied spirit sometimes, but not always, succeeds in occupying it; and occupies it with varying degrees of control. In some cases (Mrs. Piper) two or more spirits may simultaneously control different portions of the same organism."

Thus we have two distinct hypotheses—first, that the spirit of the sensitive has access, more or less, to the secrets of the invisible world; and secondly, that other spirits can take possession of the vacant organism, and reveal themselves through it, by speech or writing, or both together. What a complication results may be conceived. "We must continually bear in mind the impossibility of distinguishing the different elements that may enter into so complex a phenomenon. . . . The transparency which renders the one possession possible facilitates also the other. This may be one reason for the admixture seen in most trance-utterances—of elements which come from the sensitive's own mind with elements inspired from without. . . . Further, we cannot draw a clear line between the influence of the organism itself—as already moulded by its own indwelling spirit—and the continuing influence of that spirit, not altogether separated from the organism. . . . The result may be a kind of mixed telepathy between the sitter, the sensitive's spirit, and the extraneous spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Let us see if, for this appalling complication, we cannot substitute a theory more consistent with facts already observed, and simple enough to allow of some hope of interpretation. Let us then admit that Mrs. Piper passes into a secondary state in which her power of perception of the spiritual world is largely increased. Let us now suppose that in this spiritual world her secondary self finds memory groups surviving—possibly undergoing the process of dissolution, but still surviving and retaining a certain amount of coherence, and thus representing with more or less completeness the inner life of known persons who have passed away. Will not the known tendency of her secondary self to dramatic presentation lead to such communications as those which have been so fully and so carefully reported?

This question is in fact forced upon us by the principle of continuity which Myers rightly takes as his guide, and which is notably exemplified in the development of Mrs. Piper herself. Her first control, as we all know, was "Dr. Phinuit." Myers still clings to the belief that Phinuit may possibly be regarded "as an intelligence extraneous to Mrs. Piper—as in fact a discarnate spirit."<sup>2</sup> But he is conscious of the enormous difficulties in the way of such

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II. p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. II. p. 240.

a belief, in view of Phinuit's untrue, and indeed absurd, statements respecting his life on earth; and he admits that "many may think it most probable that the Phinuit control was nothing more than a secondary personality of Mrs. Piper." This is in fact the only theory which, at least in the present state of our knowledge, we have any right to hold.

In her third stage Mrs. Piper is controlled by "Imperator," "Rector," and others, who profess to have been when on earth certain illustrious, but not divine personages. They profess also to be identical with Stainton Moses' controls, who gave their real names to him; these were never published, but were known to Myers himself. It was therefore an obvious test that they should give through Mrs. Piper the names which they had given to Stainton Moses. This simple test they completely failed to fulfil.<sup>1</sup> Thus in the third stage the evidence for external personality breaks down as it did in the first. If Imperator and his assistants are really incarnate personalities, they are lying spirits. But in the meantime we are bound to regard them as further *dramatis personae* of Mrs. Piper's fertile subliminal self.

There remains her second period, when she was under the control of "George Pelham," who claimed to be the spirit of a known person recently deceased. We notice the progressive advance from the vulgar "Phinuit," through the cultivated "G.P." to the exalted "Imperator"; and if we are to follow any principle of continuity, we must not assume for "G.P." any different origin from the other two. The evidence may possibly be overwhelming enough to force us to do so; but then we must abandon the principle of continuity.

Is then the evidence so overwhelming? Is it enough to force us to acknowledge that the controls of the second period are what they profess to be—the still living spirits of those who have recently passed away, and are making themselves known to their friends on earth? I have already indicated my own answer to this question. The evidence is very striking and very strong. It proves, I think, that memories of the dead survive, and are under special conditions accessible to us. But I do not see that it proves the survival of what we call the living spirit, the personality—a unit of consciousness, limited and self-contained, a centre of will and vital force, carrying on into another world the aspirations and the affections of this.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Vol. XIII., pp. 408-9.

Those who took part in Mrs. Piper's earlier sittings came generally to the conclusion that she had by some subliminal faculty access to a store of memories belonging to the sitters and their friends, but not consciously present in their minds. As some one then put it, the effect was as though she had been able to rummage through a waste-paper basket full of their old letters, often torn and blurred, containing much that was unintelligible, but often affording an unmistakable, though forgotten, piece of fact. The main question for us in 1890 was whether these broken memories belonged only to the living, or whether there was not some similar store-house for the dead as well. The result of the later evidence seems to me to be that we must now accept the latter proposition as true. Further than this I do not think that it carries us.

A full discussion of the "G.P." communications would mean a review of Hodgson's and Hyslop's reports, rather than of *Human Personality*. But no reader of them can have failed to be struck by their fragmentary, obscure and generally muddled character. Professor Hyslop speaks frankly of the "discarnate spirit," as "exhibiting various degrees of clearness and confusion, merging now and then into delirium, automatism, or complete syncope."<sup>1</sup> No better illustration of this can be found than the ingenious series of experiments by which he illustrates the nature of the communications by telegraphic messages between living persons.<sup>2</sup> These clearly show, by the artificial restrictions required, how far the spirits fall below the intelligence of the normal rational man.

This undeniable and puzzling confusion is explained by Myers as due to the novel conditions under which a mind is using a brain which does not belong to it.<sup>3</sup> Such a supposition hardly seems to meet the case. The most obvious puzzle is that the communicating spirits seem to have the greatest difficulty in getting at what should be the primary means of identification—their own names. This is hard to understand if the difficulty is one of means of communication only; it clearly points to some imperfect comprehension at the origin of the message. It becomes intelligible enough on the alternate hypothesis, that the messages are in fact being given at second hand. If we imagine ourselves as endeavouring to construct a dramatic presentation of a human being from what we can find in an old diary belonging to him, we see at once that his own name might be one of the hardest things to

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Vol. xvi. p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 537-623.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II. p. 254.

make out. And I conceive that the secondary personality of Mrs. Piper may be in somewhat the same position—having access to a cluster of earthly memories where the name of the owner is not explicitly presented, and must be slowly extricated, not by the agency of the owner himself, but by a process of inference—largely aided, no doubt, by the recipients of the communications. And further, the general mental attitude of the communicants seems distinctly to point to the cluster of memories as disintegrating—full of the gaps and vaguenesses which we should expect to find as the forerunners of ultimate dissolution.

That is the conclusion to which *Human Personality* has brought me. Myers himself would, I fear, have regarded it as a complete negation of his hopes, and a practical rejection of his life's work. To me it is not so. To me "personality" presents itself mainly as a limitation—as the barrier which inexorably cuts me off from those who are nearest and dearest to me, so that they can never "know half the reasons why I smile or sigh." To a large part of the human race personality means something crippled by surroundings, or smirched with sin, or distorted by hereditary taint, as it seems to us, beyond hope of cure. It is a hope and not a fear that the dissolution of the body may mean the dissolution of this spiritual crust as well; that one day the infinite which is within us all may have freer play, and mingle in unconstrained communion with other spiritual elements equally purged of earthly dross, through channels infinitely clearer and more translucent than the imperfect and unsatisfying organs of the mortal frame.

And this hope Myers, by the life's work which he has summed up in *Human Personality*, has enormously strengthened. He has shown that even in this life we have, through the subliminal self, a contact with the infinite which is more than a mere guess—that however imperfectly and sporadically, man has glimpses of a faculty transcending the powers of sense. And he has carried the link across the grave. This is after all the great step, beside which the rest sinks into insignificance. When once that is taken, anything else may follow. Myers's further conclusions may prove in the end to be right; or man may through the ages work out a scheme of the spiritual world as far transcending Myers as Myers transcends the Hottentot. But this will not one whit diminish the debt we owe to him.

WALTER LEAF.



## "THE NINETEENTH CENTURY" AND MR. FREDERIC MYERS.

BY ANDREW LANG.

IN *The Nineteenth Century—and After*, for April 1903, appeared two articles on *Human Personality*, the book by Mr. Frederic Myers. At a Highland inn, being destitute of more serious literature, I read these essays. It did not appear to me that they were quite worthy of the genius of our leading Comteist, Mr. Frederic Harrison; and of one of our most eminent scientific men, theologians, and investigators of Mrs. Gallup, Mr. W. H. Mallock. The essay of Mr. Harrison was a sportive apologue. Free, as he is, from degrading superstition, Mr. Harrison playfully informed the town that, after "dipping into" Mr. Myers's book for about ninety minutes, he dreamed that he died, after an apoplectic seizure. *Absit omen!* Mr. Harrison must be cautious as to what he reads, avoiding what he disagrees with. He then described his posthumous adventures. While remaining Mr. Frederic Harrison, he felt great difficulty in retaining a firm hold of his consciousness of personal existence. The Aurora Borealis and (I think) other cosmic phenomena, sniggered at his efforts, and Mr. Harrison found himself tittering in sympathy. "Was I even a Gas, or a Force?" Mr. Harrison asked himself with natural anxiety. We are not concerned to answer these queries, nor to decide whether Mr. Harrison was a Force, or merely a Gas, nor even whether a Gas is a Force, as the domestic meter may seem to suggest. "Was not my dream," he exclaims complacently, "infinitely more sublime, more beautiful, more wonderful, than that of any S.P.R.?"

Who can reply? No S.P.R. known to us has any vision of its own; we cannot compare such a non-existent dream with the *Somnia Pythagorea* of Mr. Harrison, when he asked himself whether he was not, perhaps, a Gas, or a Force, perhaps.

The apologue of Mr. Harrison, composed after "dipping into" a book by Mr. Myers, a man of not inconsiderable intellect and

ustry, seemed an odd apparition, and a trifle out-of-date, in the *Nineteenth Century—and After*. After the Nineteenth Century, are we to be discussing Mr. Harrison's taste in dreams?

Having read the badinage of Mr. Harrison, I turned to the more solid arguments of Mr. Mallock. Now I find him deep in the monumental title-pages of books of the Elizabethan age, looking for blemishes of the Hanged Hog (or Bacon), and encountering the Porcupine, collared and fettered Or, which, I learn, was the crest of Sir Philip Sidney. Again he is in the forefront of the science of our time, instructing the veteran Lord Kelvin, who appears to require some hints as to the Suction of the Cosmic Egg. Next Mr. Mallock reveals to the reading public the Doctrine of Mrs. Gallup, and examines a Baconian cypher with the acumen of a Poe or a Phellips; and anon he dazzles, or monishes, as the novelist of Society. It was to be expected that such a man would have taken Psychical Research, like all the rest of the knowledge, for his province; while a tie yet more endearing seemed to exist between the sympathies of Mr. Mallock and those

Mr. Myers. Among the fair and intellectual daughters of Columbia there are two whose claims to distinction are not freely rejected by the wise and learned. One, Mrs. Gallup, has discovered that Bacon wrote most of Elizabethan literature and did into prose part

Pope's translation of the Iliad. She has unriddled the cypher in which Bacon not only reveals his literary secret, but displays an engaging ignorance of history, law, and even of his own family circle. In the most chivalrous manner, and with a mind truly open, Mr. Mallock advocated the desirableness of studying Mrs. Gallup's system, though, to the pedantic specialist, it seems to be demonstrably conspicuous nonsense. Mr. Myers was an even more ardent believer in those claims to communicate with the dead, which Mrs. Piper, of Boston, U.S. (as I understand), does not make, the lady leaving the question to be settled by the learned.

Nobody can believe everything, and it was too much to expect that an investigator of Mrs. Gallup should also be a student of Mrs. Piper. Still, one thought that Mr. Mallock would sympathize with Mr. Myers. He does not, and he even attributes intellectual dishonesty to that writer. This is an antiquated method in controversy, and I do not dispute the intellectual honesty of Mr. Mallock. Heaven forbid! Still, when I read his article it appeared to me that he had not perused his author very carefully, and that he first attributed to Mr. Myers, and then refuted, certain ideas which

Mr. Myers did not, in my opinion, entertain: a practice very common among critics.

I therefore wrote to the editor of the *Nineteenth Century—and After*, saying that if no stronger champion were in the field I would gladly cross swords with Mr. Mallock. As the editor had given plenty of room to a discussion about Bacon's claim to the throne of England, and to the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, I deemed that he might spare a few pages to my attempt to expiscate Mr. Myers's ideas. The editor consented; two or three letters passed between us. I sent in the following paper, and he rejected it almost by return of post. I then asked whether I might publish his letters with my paper, and he,—I think not unnaturally,—refused his permission. About the contents of these letters my lips are sealed. The S.P.R., however, will observe that the labour of half the lifetime of a learned and industrious man appears to be deemed less worthy of discussion than the cypher of Mrs. Gallup. But the fault may be my own; my paper may be unworthy of the topic about which I treat, and I make no claims to the scientific eminence of Mr. Mallock, though conceivably I know as much as he does about psychical research. The rejected paper follows, with only verbal alterations.

In trying to review Mr. Mallock's review of *Human Personality* by the late Mr. Frederic Myers, I attempt a task difficult and ungrateful. It is ungrateful because I wish that Mr. Myers had left theories, especially metaphysical and "metetherial" theories, out of his work; and it is difficult, because I am not at all certain that the theories are understood either by Mr. Mallock or by myself. Indeed, if the theories are bad, they are perhaps a good deal worse than Mr. Mallock has proved them to be. It is also my misfortune to regard metaphysics with the extreme distrust and dislike which the general public, and most men of science, freely bestow on "Metapsychics."

But if I am no psychologist or metaphysician, as Mr. Mallock is, Professor William James is a psychologist of acknowledged eminence. It is, therefore, worth remarking that while Mr. Mallock regards Mr. Myers's theory "as being not only fantastic in respect of its general character, but also as gratuitously inapplicable to the facts which he invokes it to explain," Professor James, without actually accepting the theory, treats it in a much more respectful manner. He does not like the terms "supraliminal" and "subliminal," and Mr. Myers himself gave us alternatives, "extra-marginal" and "intra-

marginal," which seem less open to objection. But Mr. James, like Mr. Myers himself, regards the theory as a mere provisional pioneering hypothesis. Mr. Myers says that he does not "claim to attain to a scientific standard." If a science he has, it is "in its dim and poor beginnings," as chemistry was "when a few monks groped among the properties of the nobler metals." (Vol. I., p. 2.) Professor James says that Mr. Myers took "a lot of scattered phenomena . . . he made series of them, filled in the transitions by delicate hypotheses or analogies, and bound them together in a system by his bold inclusive conception of the Subliminal Self. . . . What is the precise constitution of the Subliminal? Such is the problem which deserves to figure in our Science hereafter as the problem of Myers," who has also added, says Professor James, not without levity, "many ways of putting the Subliminal on tap."<sup>1</sup> Sir Oliver Lodge also claims for Myers that "he has laid a foundation . . . on ground more solid than has ever been available before,"<sup>2</sup> which is not saying much!

If we listen to these eminent men of science, Mr. Myers's effort can scarcely be so "fantastic," and "gratuitously inapplicable to the facts which he invokes it to explain," as Mr. Mallock avers. Authority, to be sure, goes for very little in such matters; still the opinions of two specialists in psychology and other sciences cannot wholly be disdained. "Analogies" and "delicate hypotheses" are, as a rule, worth very little (despite Mr. Mallock's own use of them), and Mr. Myers was clearly aware of the fact. He was groping in what he calls "the Subliminal," as Friar Bacon may have groped in "the nobler qualities of metals." He was guessing with a purpose, namely to form a kind of thread on which to string series of facts, or of what he believed to be facts. The question is not so much whether he solved "Myers's problem," but whether he stated his problem without too much of the inconsistency and self-contradiction which almost invariably beset the makers of "delicate hypotheses," even in such fields as anthropology and history. But if Mr. Myers's theory turns out to be self-contradictory and fantastic, that does not damage the value of his great collection of facts, any more than Mr. Frazer's chain of hypotheses, if here and there to some critics unacceptable, injures the merit of the vast collections in his *Golden Bough*.

Mr. Mallock writes: "Mr. Myers asserts that the subliminal self is not the unconscious part of the supraliminal, but is a separate

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XVII., pp. 15-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. XVII., p. 4.

conscious entity, and that the supraliminal is a separate entity also. The latter is as mortal and as dependent on the physical organism as any man of science can say it is; but the former stands on a totally different footing. The organism depends on it, not it on the organism, and for it alone Mr. Myers claims immortality" (p. 629).

Does Mr. Myers really mean, or say, all this?<sup>1</sup> He writes "I do not . . . assume that there are two correlative and parallel selves existing always within each of us. Rather I mean by the subliminal Self that part of the Self which is commonly subliminal." (Vol. I., p. 15.) What is "a Self," and what is meant by "a part of a Self"? I have no clear idea: such phrases seem mere counters representing notions of no fixed value. But here Mr. Myers certainly does not speak of "two separate conscious entities," one mortal, the other immortal. He denies that he makes the assumption which Mr. Mallock attributes to him. But he goes on to say that "no Self of which we can here have cognisance is in reality more than a fragment of a larger Self,—revealed in a fashion at once shifting and limited through an organisation not so framed as to afford it full manifestation."

All this does not agree with Mr. Mallock's statement of Mr. Myers's theory. Mr. Myers is not saying that we know here two separate conscious entities or selves, one deathly, one exempt from death. He says that we know no such entities, but merely have glimpses of fragments of "a larger Self" which we cannot know. That larger Self, I take it, is not the Subliminal Self, as more or less known to science. If we cannot possibly know it, perhaps the less we say about it the better; however, man is a guess-making animal.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Myers, in a footnote (Vol. I., p. 14) writes: "We may attempt, indeed, deeper distinctions, and speak of the *empirical self* on the one hand, and the *surviving* or the *transcendental self* on the other hand." But he does not say that the surviving self is exclusive of the empirical self, and he constantly gives examples of the alleged survival of the empirical self in the alleged surviving self. In Vol. I., p. 12, he writes: "The 'conscious self' of each of us, as we call it,—the empirical, the supraliminal self, as I should prefer to say—does not comprise the whole of the consciousness or of the faculty within us. There exists a more comprehensive consciousness, a profounder faculty, which for the most part remains potential only so far as regards the life of earth, *but from which the consciousness and the faculty of earth-life are mere selections*, and which reasserts itself in its plenitude after the liberating change of death." The "supraliminal" is a "mere selection" from the "subliminal." The passage quoted demonstrates that Mr. Mallock has misconceived, and therefore misstated Mr. Myers's theory, and, I repeat, he gave no references for his averments on this important head.

As Mr. Myers denies that he believes in "two separate conscious entities" in each man, and denies that in this world we know the whole of any Self whatever, one argument of Mr. Mallock's seems of doubtful validity. It is a telling argument, as it stands. "The supposed subliminal self," he says, "as operated on by the hypnotiser, instead of exhibiting any special independence or superiority, distinguishes itself mainly by its docile and credulous slavery to the suggestions of any chance operator. It is tricked by statements which would hardly deceive an idiot" (p. 638).

Indeed I understand that idiots, of all people, are least amenable to the hypnotist.

Mr. Mallock goes on to say that, according to Mr. Myers, this ultra-idiotic subliminal self "will do almost anything that the hypnotiser tells it to do, except what is morally wrong. Here it shows its innate spiritual purity. . . ."

If Mr. Myers really means all this, he has clearly lost hold of his own theory. For his theory is that in no way can we, while "here," get knowledge of the whole of "the larger self," or even of any other self: we cannot, therefore, disengage by hypnotism the whole of the subliminal self. Consequently "the hypnotic stratum," as Mr. Myers calls it, which is so easily "tricked" by the operator, is *not* all the "larger," or even "the subliminal self." That self, by Mr. Myers's definition, it cannot be. The self manifested in the hypnotic condition is *not* the subliminal self, or the soul, or the immortal somewhat, *neat*, for we can never get it neat! It is only one "fragment" (or aspect, or faculty, as I should prefer to say) of a larger self, "revealed in a fashion at once shifting and limited." This being so, and the hypnotic self being, in Mr. Myers's opinion, on the moral level of the workaday self, Mr. Mallock says "it is hard to imagine a clearer admission than this, that the two selves are the same self in different conditions, and not, as Mr. Myers imagines, two independent beings."

But Mr. Myers has denied that he conceives any two selves known to, or knowable by, us, here, as "two independent beings." I have never understood him, as Mr. Mallock does—apparently—to hold that, when observing a patient in any hypnotic stage whatever, we observe the "supposed subliminal self" at work as 'an independent being,' in full untrammelled power. I understand him to mean that a fragment or a potentiality of a self is, in the hypnotic state, able to exert itself in different degrees,—degrees 'shifting and limited,'—upon our organisms. That self is able,

more or less, to trick the body into supposing that soap is chocolate, for example, or into raising a blister where a postage stamp has been applied to the skin. Therein lies all of its "supposed independence or superiority," as far as evinced in certain hypnotic stages.<sup>1</sup> In other cases it appears sometimes to control the tendency to drink, for example. For all that I know, perhaps a sober man may be capable of conversion into a drunkard, by suggestion. Mr. Myers seems to think not, but I am unaware that the experiment has been tried. Whether improvements of conduct under suggestion are without "moral value" (as in Mr. Mallock's view) I do not know; but, even if non-moral, such improvements would be practically welcome. If, indeed, there is no Free Will (as I understand Mr. Mallock to argue, but I may misunderstand him), I don't see where morality comes in, anyhow, but that is a question which does not interest me.

So far, I really conceive that Mr. Mallock may have glided into an *ignoratio elenchi*. Mr. Myers does not hold (I take it) that we living men know, or can know, two separate conscious entities, one of which is immortal: nor does Mr. Myers think that this superior entity is known by us completely, or is fully on view, in patients under hypnotism. That were absurd. Mr. Myers does not, I repeat, maintain that in hypnotism or any other condition, do we get at the full-blown subliminal self, or at the "larger self."

If the subliminal self, as known in hypnotism, is in one aspect rather an ass, it is much worse, Mr. Myers shows, in various automatisms. Planchette, and a table (in table-tilting), are often silly, occasionally profane or obscene, more rarely are credited with knowledge not normally acquired. As a rule, the rubbish of the subliminal stratum comes to the top in automatic writing. We get subliminal nonsense, or chaff, or profanity; as well as subliminal sagacity, just as in dreams we get nonsense, usually; clairvoyance very seldom, even on Mr. Myers's showing. The reason is that the subliminal self, *as knowable by us here*, is not "a separate conscious entity" of a vastly superior character, but is only a flickering set of glimpses of all kinds, from idiocy to inspiration. At least I have always understood Mr. Myers in this sense, while taking him to mean that, in the inspired sorts of glimpses, we may detect brief fragmentary visions of his "larger self."

<sup>1</sup>In other stages and conditions other powers are supposed to be displayed. But it is not supposed that the subliminal self is "all there" at large.

On another point the critic seems to me to misunderstand his author. "For it alone," says Mr. Mallock (meaning his "superior conscious entity"), "Mr. Myers claims immortality." It appears more accurate to say that he claims for "the larger self" persistence or survival, after death. Immortality is another matter. But does Mr. Myers say that the supraliminal ordinary self—the inferior of Mr. Mallock's pair of conscious entities—is mortal, or is extinguished by death? Mr. Mallock avers that he does: if he does, Mr. Myers rejects much of what he himself accepts as evidence. The only supraliminal "self" that can be conceived of as surviving death is the continuous chain of human memories and associations. Now if these do not survive, immortality had no interest for Mr. Myers. He wanted to renew his old friendships, *veterum haud immemor amorum*. His phantasms of the dead manifestly remember their earthly homes, friends, and kinships, so do his spirits which talk through Mrs. Piper & Co., though they have forgotten any Greek they ever had to an astonishing degree. "G.P.," that famed spirit, "felt bad in his head"; a thoroughly supraliminal sensation, just as a man whose leg has been amputated feels pain in that leg. All these memories—all things, in fact, that Mr. Myers's spirits do or say—are survivals of the supraliminal consciousness. How, then, can Mr. Mallock aver that, in Mr. Myers's theory, the supraliminal self is independent, and is mortal? If Mr. Myers has said so, he is not worth thinking about at all: he is to be placed far below the rather humble level assigned to him as a reasoner by Mr. Mallock. The common phantasm of the dead, in Mr. Myers's opinion, is "not all there"; the soul of the dead man is *not* wholly occupied, like the spectral minister of the Kirk, in tramping round the country near Lessudden (Vol. II., pp. 396, 397). Only a casual side-stream of his consciousness is occupied with Tweed-side, but that side-stream is as supraliminal as trout. Thus the supraliminal self *must* survive, despite Mr. Mallock, in the theory of Mr. Myers. If it did not, the personality of each of us could not survive at all, to the joy of Mr. Frederic Harrison.

Mr. Mallock remarks that Mr. Myers, in his chapter on Sleep, "insists again that the subliminal self is a separate self-existing personality" (p. 630). If so, Mr. Myers contradicts himself, for he has written "I find it permissible and convenient to speak of subliminal selves, or of a subliminal self. . . . I mean by the subliminal self *that part of the self* which is commonly subliminal," being no more



than "a fragment of a larger self." Now, unlike Mr. Mallock, I cannot find in Mr. Myers's chapter on Sleep any statement that the subliminal self is "a separate self-existing personality." An exact reference to this statement is not given by Mr. Mallock, nor can I find the passage. I do find Mr. Myers saying that "we shall have *two phases of personality developing into separate purposes and separate directions from a parent stem,*" "the waking personality," and "the sleeping personality" (Vol. I., pp. 151-152). It is true that, elsewhere in this passage, Mr. Myers speaks of "the soul," but I do not understand him to mean that "the soul" is identical with the subliminal self, *as known to us.*

But what especially puzzles me is that Mr. Mallock, after asserting that Mr. Myers insists that "the subliminal self is a separate, self-existing personality," offers the references which he does give to "the classes of facts which prove this most conclusively." They are "Sections 413 and 421 A" (Vol. I., p. 130, p. 379). In one of these cases a woman remembers in sleep events productive of a mental shock, which she does not remember when awake. In the other case a man discovers in a dream the place where a friend has dropped a watch. Mr. Myers conjectures that the loser's "subliminal self" saw the watch fall, which merely means that consciousness of the incident did not also present itself to the loser's ordinary mind; such cases are common, the correct memory arising later in a dream. In this instance the loser's subliminal self may have wired on the fact to the friend by telepathy, or, says Mr. Myers, there may be another explanation. I do not see, as Mr. Mallock does, that Mr. Myers here asserts that the subliminal self is "a separate self-existing personality," any more than any psychologist does when he speaks of the "separate" or "secondary personalities" of hysterical patients, Félicité or Hélène Smith. These are not conceived of as "self-existing entities," but as mere phases of the personality of Félicité or of Hélène.

To me it appears that matters of terminology cause the misapprehensions of Mr. Myers's meaning which are entertained either by Mr. Mallock or by myself. I do not conceive Mr. Myers to mean that "soul" and "subliminal self" are synonymous terms. Mr. Mallock speaks of "the subliminal soul," which appears to imply the existence (in Mr. Myers's theory) of a supraliminal soul, but did Mr. Myers ever speak of a supraliminal soul? In his Glossary, to my chagrin, "soul" does not appear, nor does "spirit." But (Vol. I., p. 119) "soul" seems to mean something in man, to

which a spirit in the universe is, for purposes of argument, assumed to be "accessible and responsive," and soul or spirit, or both, are active in vision, "hypnotic rejuvenation," automatisms, and so forth. But "soul" is not identical, as I understand my author, with "subliminal self," as known to us.

Neither Mr. Mallock nor myself is much to be blamed if one or both of us misapprehend Mr. Myers's meaning. For my part I think that he meant "soul is not absent from the constitution of the subliminal self, as ether is not absent from the constitution of apple dumpling. But apple dumpling is not ether, and the subliminal self is not the soul." That is, the subliminal self, as at present known to psychologists, is not the soul, which, to us here, is not knowable.

The general reader will not study Mr. Myers's book, but he has perused Mr. Mallock's article. I am anxious that the authority of so great a philosophic name should not (without further examination) convince the general reader that Mr. Myers was so abjectly muddle-headed as Mr. Mallock would induce us to believe. If the general reader has favoured me with his esteemed attention so far, I hope that he will feel so hopelessly perplexed that he will try to hammer out Mr. Myers's meaning for himself, or will dismiss the subject from his meditations altogether, which I take to be his better course. Into Mr. Mallock's criticism of Mr. Myers's "synthesis" I cannot pretend to go. I do not profess to understand why, if "ether" is "material," "metether"<sup>1</sup> should be "spiritual" (Vol. I., p. 215). The whole thing merely comes to this, that Mr. Myers believed in spirit as well as matter, and that most men of science (but not all) do not. The words "matter" and "spirit" seem to me but cheques drawn on an airy capital without metallic basis. But I do not think, as Mr. Mallock does, that Mr. Myers "juggled with his own convictions," or was "dishonest" when he wrote "metetherial" in place of "metetheric." I take no sense of difference between the two new words. It is as absurd, I think, to talk of the "metetherial" as of the "metetheric grace of God." Both phrases are absurd. To myself Mr. Myers appeared unusually honest; one could, and I think that I actually did, shake or destroy his belief in a case, for example, of supposed

<sup>1</sup> "Metetheric" apparently includes the meaning, "not etheric," as "metaphysics" includes the meaning, "not physics." Like Mr. Mallock I suppose the ether (if it exists) to be material, but I must disclaim all knowledge about ether, matter, and spirit.

communication from a spirit, to which he had attached considerable value. I also notice that the most extraordinary of modern "ghost stories," which appeared in Mr. Myers's work in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., is not included in his book.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he saw reason to distrust this narrative. He was always ready, beyond most writers whom I have known, to accept criticism with candour and good humour.

Mr. Mallock, preoccupied with Mr. Myers's theory, does not criticise his alleged "facts" with any fulness. The facts, not Mr. Myers's interpretations of them, are to my mind the important part of the book. For example, Mr. Mallock mentions various categories of waking hallucinations of the sane and healthy. Some cases, as Mr. Myers quotes Mr. Gurney (and Mr. Mallock quotes Mr. Lawrence Oliphant) might be (rather fancifully) ascribed to movements leaving "some impress" on things in general "like the lines in which the voice records itself on the moving disc of a phonograph," and the person, perhaps long dead, who caused the original movement, might "be reproduced in the consciousness of persons sufficiently sensitive." This would imply no survival of the aforesaid person, any more than a dead man's voice, echoed from a phonograph, would prove his survival.

Mr. Mallock says "the majority of ghosts can perhaps be disposed of in these ways, without the necessity of invoking any theory which does not accord in character with current scientific conceptions." But that things at large are phonographs and spectrographs, (as if the road, trees, hedges, and so on at Lessudden retained and reproduced, for Miss Scott of Lessudden and others, the spectre of a dead minister on his "daidling bit,"<sup>2</sup>) is not "a current scientific conception," surely! Moreover the phantasms of the dead (on the evidence), usually "take notice" (like babies) of attempts to approach them. The spook of the minister, pursued by Miss M. W. Scott, "turned round and faced her," twice (Vol. II., p. 397). As I know the lady and the place, the adventure interests me, and such cases are not infrequent, if I may trust persons of honour and distinction who have been "percipients." Now mere spectrographic reflections would not give these signs of consciousness. However, my point is that, if science did entertain this spectrographic theory, then science would not merely deny and say "pooh!" to "ghost stories," but would admit the facts (if well attested), having secured an explanation. In the same humour, Mr. Mallock does not reject, *en masse*,

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Vol. XI., pp. 547-554.

<sup>2</sup> Sauntering spot.

Mr. Myers's death-wraiths, and other hallucinations, nor dispose of them by the cheap theory of “It happened to be B's hour to see a hallucination of A, when it happened to be A's hour to die.” He does not reject them, but says, “had Mr. Myers only lived to see the development of wireless telegraphy, he would have realised how unnecessary and how childish was the spiritualistic hypothesis whereby he seeks to explain the fact that a telepathic message is capable of being conveyed to several recipients simultaneously.”

Mr. Myers died in January, 1901, and, in April, 1901, I ventured to begin a romance of wireless telegraphy. The topic was not revealed to man between January and April, 1901. Mr. Myers's comments on Sir William Crookes's suggestion of a theory by which telepathy is propagated by “ether-waves of even smaller amplitude and greater frequency than those which carry the X rays,” are quite as germane to the matter as the latest exploits of Mr. Marconi. Any one can read Mr. Myers's objections to Sir William Crookes's suggestion (Vol. I, pp. 245, 246). To me they appear telling, though I have no theory, especially no “spiritualistic” theory, of my own. It does seem clear that, if we accept any of Mr. Myers's cases either of “precognition,” or of phantasms of the dead of a departed generation, the phenomena cannot be explained by the widest licence of an assumption based on the analogy of wireless telegraphy, and postulating similar “waves” from living brain to living brain. “An etheric telepathy, and other cognate perceptions of distant things” (distant in *space*, Mr. Mallock probably means), is a hypothesis which cannot explain, (even if it state a *vera causa*, about which we know nothing), the classes of phenomena to which I allude. The hypothesis rests on the sand of analogy, and does not cover all the alleged facts.

Now, in my opinion, theorizing here is but a human weakness; we need many years devoted to collecting and criticising statements of alleged facts. The merit of Mr. Myers and his friends is to have done in collection and criticism of statements hitherto ignored, so much work, that scientific men of Mr. Mallock's eminence may admit the “sober likelihood” of facts previously scouted, but now explained (by aid of analogy), as the result of processes in the living organism. To myself, explanations based on analogy appear of next to no value; the scientific police “has a clue” of the most vaporous nature. But Mr. Myers's own explanation, at present, seems rather poetry than science. The theory, on the other hand, to which Mr. Mallock inclines is at least as old as Lavaterus (*circ.*

1580) and Izaak Walton. The hypothesis of Mr. Myers is of neolithic antiquity, and its modern forms, as held by Hegel and Karl du Prel, are so closely akin to Mr. Myers's that I am surprised to find him citing du Prel but once, and Hegel (as far as the index shows) not at all.<sup>1</sup>

The success of Mr. Myers and his associates has lain in procuring a slight amount of attention for facts in human nature accepted by Hegel, but hitherto dismissed, as a rule, without examination. Whatever may be the future (or non-future), of the human personality, that personality may come to be more closely studied: science may no longer, like the fabled ostrich, hide her head in the sand. To me the "Gospel" of Mr. Myers may be expressed in the words, "Do look into things!" He aimed at the sky, but he has, I hope, hit this tree. If we cease to argue about such themes as perplexed Milton's fallen angels in hell, if we merely study and make experiments in human nature, following a path hitherto barred against trespassers, we may learn that we are other than a vain people supposes.

Differing from Mr. Myers on a hundred points, holding Mrs. Piper almost as cheap as I do Mrs. Gallup (but not quite), I yet think that many qualities and portions of Mr. Myers's work deserve recognition more generous than Mr. Mallock has given them. Even if he *did* "see distant gates of Eden gleam" (a childish and fantastic hallucination), even if he did not, like Mr. Mallock's Virginia St. John, go about giggling at the idea of an Intelligent First Cause, he worked manfully, courageously,—I say honestly,—at an uphill task.

It is a matter of detail, and I could only make my point by long citations, but I do not agree with Mr. Mallock that the cases of Hélène Smith, Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, Mrs. Piper, and the Rev. Stainton Moses, offer "the best examples" of "veridical phantasms of the dead," among other phenomena. Indeed I find no "veridical phantasms of the dead" among the records of these gifted persons. Possibly Mr. Mallock has not studied Professor Flournoy's two books about Hélène Smith? The examples which Mr. Mallock does adduce, of other phenomena, are not given at their strongest; indeed some are hardly given at all. The odd case of Colonel Gurwood (Vol. II.,

<sup>1</sup> Du Prel: *Philosophy of Mysticism*, translated by Mr. Massey. Hegel: *Philosophie des Geistes, Werke*, Vol. VII., Berlin, 1845. Mr. Wallace's translation of 1894 is published by the Clarendon Press (cf. my *Making of Religion*, pp. 33-36, Longmans, 1898).

pp. 161-167) is not offered as a proof of the survival of that gallant officer—with a headache—but as an instance of "the growing difficulty which the theory of forgotten memories" (in the living) "here involves." By the collection of many such records, Mr. Myers thinks that we might reach, or approach, "some general conclusion as to the source from which these retrocognitive facts come—if in any cases forgotten memory fails to explain them" (Vol. II., p. 167). These are impartial remarks, though, for his own personal part, Mr. Myers put his trust in some "records" which to me seem valueless, and, like Dr. Hodgson (a sceptical man), came to believe that he had proofs of actual "possession."

So far I give my reply to Mr. Mallock exactly as it was written for the Editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After*. I now add, by way of reinforcement, other examples, as I conceive, of Mr. Mallock's misfortune in misunderstanding and misstating the ideas which he opposes.

The gist of Mr. Mallock's argument is, that "the two selves are the same self in different conditions, and not, as Mr. Myers imagines, two independent entities." But Mr. Mallock, though often insisting on this alleged imagination of Mr. Myers, never once gives a reference to Mr. Myers's book for the opinion. I must repeat that, if I understand Mr. Myers, he did not occupy the position which Mr. Mallock attacks. Mr. Mallock climbs a kopje gallantly, with fixed bayonets and hoorays; he plants his banner victoriously on the top. But that is easy, for the kopje was not held. Mr. Myers, like Mr. Mallock, believes that "the two selves are the same self in different conditions," and not that "they are two independent beings." Mr. Mallock, at first, seems to understand that this is Mr. Myers's notion, for he writes—in his second page—"The supraliminal self is" (that is, in Mr. Myers's theory), "something thrown up above the surface by the self which is submerged below." If so, how can Mr. Mallock keep averring that Mr. Myers regards the supraliminal self as "an independent being"? The so-called "supraliminal self," in Mr. Myers's hypothesis, is only the one self revealing itself in the conditions of explicit, ordinary, every-day consciousness. The hypnotic self, again, is only the one self under hypnotic conditions of various kinds and degrees: it is not the one self utterly untrammelled, as Mr. Mallock seems to think that Mr. Myers held it to be. On the same page (629) Mr. Mallock asserts both that Mr. Myers holds the supraliminal self to be an emanation of the submerged self, "some-

thing thrown up by" that, and also that he holds the supraliminal self to be "a separate entity." Some one is guilty of a contradiction in terms, and I do not think that Mr. Myers is the erring logician.

Mr. Mallock drops, I conceive, into another error. We have noted that, in his opinion, Mr. Myers, had he lived to see the development of wireless telegraphy (which to a considerable extent he did), "would have realised how unnecessary and how childish was the spiritualistic hypothesis whereby he seeks to explain the fact that a telepathic message is capable of being conveyed to several percipients simultaneously" (p. 641). Mr. Myers's hypothesis of telepathy, involving several percipients, is here said by Mr. Mallock to be "spiritualistic." But (p. 632) Mr. Mallock had remarked, "telepathy in itself is not, Mr. Myers says, a fact more spiritual or hyperphysical than light, nor does it point of itself to an intelligence independent of matter," except in certain cases, for which he provides a "spiritualistic" and "childish" and "unnecessary" explanation. Now, where does Mr. Myers say that telepathy "is not more spiritual or hyperphysical than light?" He says just the contrary in Vol. I., p. 24, and Vol. II., p. 195. As usual, no reference is given by Mr. Mallock. In Volume I., pp. 245, 246, Mr. Myers argues against the theory that a "system of undulations" (as in light) "can explain the alleged facts" (cf. II., 141-145). I cannot find that Mr. Myers (while not presuming to deny that ether and undulations may be concerned in telepathy) ever says what Mr. Mallock makes him say, that telepathy "is not, in itself, a fact more spiritual or hyperphysical than light."

In short, Mr. Mallock appears to me too often to credit Mr. Myers with opinions which he did not hold, to give no references, and to attack positions which are not held. As to telepathy, Mr. Mallock does not appear to deny the phenomenon, but to incline to explain it, if it exists, by the analogy of "wireless telepathy." Mr. Myers had considered, as we see, Sir William Crookes's suggestion in that kind (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XII., pp. 348-352), and, among other objections, urged that "it is hard to understand how A can emit a pattern of vibrations which, radiating equally in all directions, shall affect not only his distant friend B, but also the strangers C and D who happen to be standing near B, and affect no other persons, so far as we know, in the world" (Vol. I., p. 246).

Mr. Mallock appears to see nothing in all this. The syntonisation of the cerebral coherers of A, B, C, and D offers no difficulty

to his expert mind. Not knowing aught about these matters, I must refer the question to Sir Oliver Lodge, who has gone pretty deep into these things. Men are not Marconi machines, and, in my ignorance, I must pause before arguing as if they were, for that, I repeat, would be a mere argument from analogy.

For the rest, I am not defending Mr. Myers's hypotheses—that of "possession" I reject—I am only anxious that they should be understood before they are rejected. In history it is well to quote the exact words of a document: in science it appears to be enough to write that "Mr. Myers says" this or that, in the terms of the scientist himself, and without references to the text of the author. Daily experience proves that profitable criticisms cannot be produced in this way. I need hardly add that, though I think Mr. Mallock misunderstood, I am sure that he never dreamed of misrepresenting Mr. Myers.



## REPLY TO MR. PODMORE'S CRITICISM.

BY PROFESSOR JAMES H. HYSLOP.

IN this reply to Mr. Podmore's review in *Proceedings*, Part XLV., of my report on the trance phenomena of Mrs. Piper, I shall not say one word in defence of the spiritistic hypothesis. I do not think that the defence of this theory is half so important at this stage of our investigations as an intelligent and consistent conformity to scientific method, as it must be applied to any mass of facts whatever. This requires the detailed application of some single hypothesis to all the facts of a record and the exclusion of all adjunctive suppositions which do not naturally articulate with each other in dealing with the concrete totality involved, but which represent some probability in their conjunction, as well as inherent applicability to the facts.

There are two considerations to be noticed. They are the questions of accuracy in dealing with the record and of the application of general principles evidentially sustained in the case. The first is a question of *fact*, and the second a question of *method*. I take these in their order.

1. Mr. Podmore says: "The first séance in Professor Hyslop's series, according to his own original estimate of it is 'absolutely' worthless as evidence." Now, if the reader of Mr. Podmore's review will turn up his own reference to my report and also look at p. 26 of the same, he will find that I did not say that the first sitting "is absolutely worthless," or that I regarded it in the light which Mr. Podmore's garbled quotation would imply. I said a very different thing. I said that I had "treated it and would treat it *alone* as absolutely worthless." But I was careful to indicate that I was treating it as a part of a whole requiring the same hypothesis to explain it. The statements which follow this quotation do not commit me to any view that the reader may adopt, but show that I hold to my present opinion in spite of difficulties which I recognised and appreciated in the minds of those who did not and could

to measure the facts as I could. I did not alter my opinion of weakness evidentially until I discovered a number of true things, some of them synthetic, which I had at first supposed false. These gave it a value and unity with other sittings that it did not seem to have at first.

2. In the allusion to the "communicator's" question, "Do you hear her sing," Mr. Podmore does not seem to see why I called it automatism and apparently refuses to recognise it as such. I agree that "to the uninstructed reader it was not more out of place than other remarks interjected in the course of the trance writings," any of which in the dramatic play of personality were treated as automatisms. But I was speaking to the instructed reader, the psychopathologist, and to those who admitted the trance condition. Mr. Podmore does, who would recognise on any theory whatever, except conscious fraud, that as an irrelevant statement it must be treated as an automatism. Moreover, I did not, as charged, recognise the question as relevant, but on the contrary, just because it was irrelevant, recognised that it was an automatism. The psychological reasons for this judgment are patent to the student of abnormal mental phenomena.

3. In regard to the confusion about the names "Alice" and "Annie" several things are to be said. (a) Mr. Podmore does not state what true "valuable information" the trance intelligence could have easily gained under the circumstances. If guessing is as easy as he implies, will he please to tell some evidential true fact following from the suggestion which he insinuates. (b) What has the supposed fact that the incident is "quite in Phinuit's old style" to do with the case? Does Mr. Podmore suppose that Phinuit is wholly disposed of by a verdict of non-proven in regard to his identity? I had explicitly provided in my discussion for this very matter (pp. 254-255) and may abbreviate it by referring to what I have said in the reply to Mr. Carrington on the same point (Part XLV. p. 365). (c) The remark by Mr. Podmore is wholly irrelevant to the question of interpreting the record and confuses the reader with implications about the evidential issue which is not here concerned, because my question, "Is it Alice?" may have two interpretations other than the one suggested by the bracketted doubt about the writing which was inserted afterwards, and in fact, as shown by the next question, was intended as a ruse to make the medium think that Alice was correct, and there was no excuse for the correction on my theory of suggestion.

4. Regarding the confusion of D for NK in the name Frank, I may say: (a) The reading was primarily Dr. Hodgson's, as explained in my report (pp. 14-15, and 301), and not mine, and his first impression was allowed to stand, although the resemblance to NK is definite and clear enough. We decided the doubt in this as in all similar cases against the evidential interpretation. (b) Does Mr. Podmore think this is a prejudiced way to treat the subject? (c) The name is distinctly FRAD, except the symbol for D or NK, the A being a very clear capital. Now how does Mr. Podmore account for such a name on the hypothesis of either guessing, suggestion, or inference?

5. Mr. Podmore says: "The messages for the most part bear no label of origin." (a) If he means *some* of the messages which he mentions without explaining their context, his statement, which allows for some of them having this label, will not be open to criticism. If he means, as is most apparent from his allusions being general, the messages in the whole report, his statement is either misleading or false, and the facts of the record, which are not so dependent on "internal evidence" (an elastic expression) as Mr. Podmore implies, support a very definite "label of origin" in most cases. A man does not have to announce his name every time he talks through a telephone, though he may have to do so generally at first. There may be plenty of conclusive indications on any theory whatever, fraud, guessing, or secondary personality, of the origin intended, and this suffices for the *psychological* question in an inductive problem. Mr. Podmore is so enamoured of the importance of proper names that he apparently cannot see or appreciate this fact, which I suspect, however, he would see easily enough if fraud were in the question. (b) The proof of my assertions is found all the way through Appendix iv. of my Report, which apparently Mr. Podmore has not examined. In the experiments there described and discussed, it should be noticed that I did not permit any "label of origin" to be communicated. Only with one exception did I allow any name or relationship of the communicator, or fragmentary intimation of them to be sent. I pursued this policy purposely to anticipate and answer just such reflections as Mr. Podmore indulges in his review, and there were instances where the correct origin was discovered when the message very effectively concealed it.

6. Mr. Podmore says: "Names are thrown out haphazard, to be taken up and identified or left, as the sifter wills," and then he gives one example of his assertion, and that one not an illustration of

either the guessing or chance coincidence that he suggests! (a) The statement conveys to the reader the suggestion, especially since he makes the statement general, that we are dealing throughout with phenomena like those of the ordinary guessing mediums, when as a fact Mr. Podmore admits both the trance and an unusual intelligence connected with it. There is just enough semblance occasionally in the giving of names in the Piper case to deceive the unscientific man, but that is all. I have had a great many experiences with guessing mediums, and the haphazard throwing out of names has never shown systematically the peculiar marks of the Piper case. There is in the latter instance very generally, when the name is not given at one shot, some phonetic analogy around which the approximations to the correct name play, many of them not naturally suggested to any guessing intelligence. A man who had the slightest acquaintance with the phonetics of guessing and experimental fishing would not confuse the Piper case with the "ordinary professional clairvoyant," even on the supposition of fraud. (b) Mr. Podmore would have done well to note and mention the experiments on this point in Appendix v., where phonetics played a part in the results. (c) The example given, which has no resemblance to the general procedure in the sittings and indicated in the record, does not bear out the very natural implication of Mr. Podmore's remark, namely, that the "billet" was found in Dr. Hodgson: for the record (p. 330) shows that it was not so found either in fact or according to the spontaneous correction of the "controls" after its possible applicability to Dr. Hodgson had been assumed the day before. (d) After admitting the existence of a trance intelligence in the Piper case Mr. Podmore ought to have remarked that his instance was not an example of the "ordinary professional clairvoyant," instead of allowing the reader to suppose that he was thinking of conscious frauds.

7. In the catalogue of proper names which occur in the first sitting, Mr. Podmore says, mentioning that of Elizabeth, "It should be added that the lady introduced as Elizabeth was known in life as Eliza." This language is not clear in its implications, as a most important point is omitted. (a) It suggests that I had positively identified Elizabeth with Eliza, apparently on the resemblance of names, as Mr. Podmore is here omitting reference to context in speaking of proper names. I did not so identify them. (b) Mr. Podmore classes it as correct. I did not say that it was correct, and the record does not justify any assurance on this point. I

indicated this fact. (c) I explicitly spoke of the name as a "possible" reference to my mother's sister, and I did so, not primarily on the ground of any resemblance between Elizabeth and Eliza, but expressly on the ground that the "communicator" definitely referred to my mother's sister in close connection with the name Elizabeth, though in the order of statement the reference could have been to the name of Mary, and if the reader will examine the record in its psychological character he will find a natural explanation of even this discrepancy. Mr. Podmore omits to say anything about the synthetic feature of the case on which I had founded the "possible," and only the "possible," reference to my mother's sister. (d) Further, I said merely that it contained "only this approximation to the truth," naming the "possible" meaning of the name. All this should be recognised in any discussion or remarks about the application of chance to the first sitting.

8. A little further on, in giving a list of correct names mentioned at the second sitting, Mr. Podmore explicitly identifies the name Eliza with that of Elizabeth, as mentioned in the first sitting. This is a guess by Mr. Podmore and is wrong. There is not a word in the record or in my statements to suggest this identification. I had explicitly distinguished them by saying that Elizabeth was possibly intended for my mother's sister, whose name was Eliza, and that the Eliza of the second sitting was my father's sister. I did not know until more than two weeks later (cf. note p. 350) that my mother had a sister by the name of Eliza, and it was my aunt that suspected the meaning of the reference to Elizabeth. Mr. Podmore's mistake comes from his habit of attaching undue importance to proper names and ignoring the synthetic and contextual features of the "communications."

9. Mr. Podmore says that my full name was given at the second sitting, although this was given only in piecemeal, according to his statement. (a) This statement of Mr. Podmore is not correct, and there is not a word in the record to support it. (b) Only a part of my christian name was given at the beginning of the sitting and no reference to my surname made afterward at that sitting. (c) The explicit statement in the record (p. 322) is that "Hyslop" referred to my father and not to myself. The "communicator" definitely claimed to be my father as Mrs. Piper came out of the trance, and my note assumed and discussed only that interpretation of the name. (d) The reader will see from the facts just stated, including the context, that the name was *not* "ejaculated without context,

leaving the sitter to find his own application," as is asserted by Mr. Podmore. This failure to observe contextual incidents is all the more inexcusable when taken in connection with his own remark. (e) The name was not the only "definite true statement" made at the second sitting. There were several of a very pertinent sort and with as much weight in the recognition of personal identity as many that sufficed to suggest and confirm it in the experiments recorded in Appendix iv. (f) The intimation that "the medium had an opportunity of passing in review the events of the first sitting" is either a *suggestio falsi*, contradicting Mr. Podmore's own readiness to exclude fraud from the case (p. 376), or it is an irresponsible generality without specific illustration or proof. It does not distinguish between Mrs. Piper's conscious reflection in her normal state on what was observed by her before and after the trance and normally conscious knowledge of the "communications" which might be inferred from Mr. Podmore's statement, but which she has no external means of obtaining and which all the facts seem to disprove or contradict. Neither does it distinguish between either of these and supernormal subliminal action. Now as Mr. Podmore had intimated that there was nothing of a supernormal character in my record in his remark that "normal channels of information were wide enough to have conveyed everything in the later séances which was true and relevant" (p. 376), the only rational interpretation of his language regarding the review of the events at the sitting is that he meant to suppose the possibility of fraud, and unless you specify the kind of fraud that you mean, the reader is justified in supposing that you mean conscious fraud. Subliminal fraud I had considered and discussed (pp. 153, 292). There should be no admission of the trance if you are going to use such language as "passing in review the events of the first sitting," as it conveys a wholly false implication in the case. It is using the imputation of "possible" conscious fraud without making oneself responsible for evidence that it is a fact, after confessing earlier (p. 376) that there was no evidence in Mrs. Piper's past history that she practised the ordinary fraud.

10. In Mr. Podmore's summary marked (C) he mentions some incidents in the record and then says: "In the detailed notes (p. 314) the passage is interpreted as coming from the father. But in the report (p. 28) it is apparently assigned to the uncle." Let me remark: (a) The passage to which Mr. Podmore alludes is not specifically quoted nor specifically alluded to on page 28 of the Report. (b) I do not "in the detailed notes (p. 314)" specifically

refer the passage to my father directly. I made a purely hypothetical statement and it was made with reference to the possibility of treating my brother Charles as an intermediary, though the "communication" be supposed to be thus indirectly from my father. (c) I do not specifically refer the passage to my uncle on page 28, and there is not even an appearance of it, unless you assume that I must indicate all omissions made for the sake of brevity and including non-evidential matter. I left the reader to observe where my uncle began, not even specifying page references to the passage purporting to come from my uncle, as it had no importance for the summary at this point. There is no such definite contradiction in my interpretation as is apparently implied by Mr. Podmore's observation. (d) I distinctly said on page 28 that I passed by all that might have come from my uncle to summarise my father's messages, and so gave no clue to what I identified and what I did not identify with the uncle's "communications."

11. In Mr. Podmore's summary (D) he says: "Then follows general talk about the loneliness and grief of Eliza, *after* the sitter had intimated by his question that Eliza was still living." A slight correction is necessary in this statement. (a) Not one word is said in this "general talk" about the "loneliness" of Eliza either before or after the question which I asked. The idea has to be imported into the statement from my note (p. 363). (b) The answer to my question is not a case of "intimation," or suggestion, as understood in the phenomena of secondary personality, but is rather amenable to guessing. (c) If this passage is to be described as "general talk," what should be said of the specific and very pertinent incidents in the reference to "music, flowers, walks, drives," and "she thought she saw me in her sleep" in close connection with the apparent allusion to my father?

12. In summary (K) Mr. Podmore repeats the error made previously in regard to the "ejaculation of the sitter's surname without context."

13. Mr. Podmore says that the statement, "Give me my hat and let me go," made in the second sitting, is "claimed as characteristic." (a) This is not correct. I made no such statement in the record. (b) I explicitly excluded this statement by "my father" from the list of phrases which I claimed to be "characteristic" (p. 89). (c) It was the connection in which it was said, not the fact of it, that gave the statement interest, and it was made also in the first sitting in a similar psychological situation and very suggestive connection.

(d) It was my brother that discovered and indicated the pertinence of the statement.

14. As to Mr. Podmore's statements about the Cooper incidents there are a few things to notice. (a) The correspondence with Dr. Cooper was not "purely conjectural," and I did not say it was. I stated that it was *probable*, which I so put cautiously as against fairly definite evidence, my stepmother's memory, that it was a fact. (b) The imputation in Mr. Podmore's statement, "It is true that in any case writing is not talking," is not justified by the record. The talks were a fact supported by specific mention of my stepmother of the time and incidents connected with them: the fact of writing was not so supported. I mentioned the friendship and talking in my note on the incident, both certain facts, as evidence independently of my stepmother's testimony that the correspondence was probable, as well as indications of correctness in the "communications." (c) The "communicator" made no reference whatever to a photo of either this Dr. Joseph Cooper or Mr. Samuel Cooper, the latter of whom had been suggested by myself. Mr. Podmore's statement implies that this mention was made in reference to Dr. Cooper. (d) I did not make the slightest reference in my notes or elsewhere to any such photo. Mr. Podmore's conception of the incident exists only in his imagination. (e) The actual "communications" about the photo. in connection with the name of Cooper, as any intelligent reader of the record may see for himself, do not lend the slightest support to Mr. Podmore's supposition that the mention of it referred to either of the Coopers. The form of statement in this connection *explicitly* indicates a previous allusion to it when I was present and out of all connection with the Coopers and before I had suggested the name (pp. 52, 397). (f) Mr. Podmore actually quotes the statement of the "communicator" and does not remark this reference. (g) The implication in Mr. Podmore's statement, "that Dr. Cooper did not live West, but, unfortunately, East," is wholly misleading. It implies most apparently that the interpretation on which the statement is founded is the necessary one regarding the message. This is not the fact and I so intimated it. The "communicator" did not say that Cooper "lived West," but "old friend *in the West*." How would Mr. Podmore, on his interpretation, make the falsity of the statement rational on the hypothesis of fraud or guessing? You have to put on it the interpretation which I said was possible in order to make the assumption of fraud rational, and I stated this interpretation, as my original note shows, to indicate that I was willing to



test the "communications" by the hypothesis of fraud. (h) The interpretation of the note (p. 386) which was a correction of the earlier note and whose most apparent meaning refers to the correctness of the allusion "in the West," if it implied the fact of Dr. Cooper's living there, flatly contradicts Mr. Podmore's interpretation of the message.<sup>1</sup> (i) Mr. Podmore omits one of the most important facts of the Cooper incident and which with its synthetic or contextual relation to others in the same connection is a circumstance of some interest. It was the statement regarding the temporal relation between the death of Dr. Cooper and that of my father.

15. Mr. Podmore quotes (p. 388) a statement of mine relative to the evidential nature of a passage in the "communications" of my uncle, James M'Clellan, and names references in the record in which my statement was not made and which would most naturally imply to the reader that my statement was made in the connection indicated, when it was not. (a) My statement was made on page 109, and Mr. Podmore's references were 111, 470, 535, representing a totally different context and one that would conceal the incidents on which my statement was based. (b) In alluding to the mistake regarding the identity of John M'Clellan, the incidents of whom I had summarised separately from those of James M'Clellan, Mr. Podmore rather intimates, in his remark about a supposed suspicious circumstance, that my statement respecting the pertinent and evidential character of the incidents from James M'Clellan is not justified. If Mr. Podmore had actually mentioned the correct and decidedly evidential incidents in the "communications" of this James M'Clellan his strictures might have been treated as less objectionable as regards the facts. But to mention this one lone exception and error as if it were the whole case is very like concealing the truth from the reader. Besides Mr. Podmore positively indicates that the

<sup>1</sup> I shall confess frankly to a sin in this note correcting the earlier one. Mr. Podmore, however, has not remarked it, although I had indicated in various places the proper interpretation of the incident. I confess, on reading it now, that the note correcting the earlier one is quite misleading, and should have been expanded a little or modified to make clear what I had in mind. At the time it was written, and this was while the report was going through the press, I was anxious to abbreviate and had the Cooper incident as a whole in mind, and inserted it here because I was mainly bent on changing the allusion to "mediumistic tricks." I am very glad that I can call attention to this piece of carelessness. It is quite probable also that in writing the note I had in mind the Cooper Memorial School which was situated in the West from my father's home.

mistake is "suspicious," and this without evidence for the insinuation of fraud in his allusion to the county history which I had considered in making up my judgment, a fact not told the reader by Mr. Podmore, and without the consideration of the incidents of the lost finger and the name Hathaway together with the omission of all reference to the only other fact than the name, the ensign commission, that could be obtained in that history and that was not mentioned by the "communicator." I had mentioned every circumstance and fact by which Mr. Podmore's hypothesis could be tried and it was clear to every intelligent reader that this county history was not the source of the knowledge conveyed. Cf. *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. x., p. 219.

16. In regard to the name Carruthers, which is not fully explained by Mr. Podmore, I have not to complain of an error of fact so definitely as in other cases, but only to say that his apparent representation of the incident seems to insinuate that I did not treat the failure to get that name as an objection to the hypothesis that I was testing, and that I should have treated it as he does. In the statistical summary where I was treating all "factors," or "single incidents," individually and without relation to context, I classed this name as a positive error. But it is context and synthetic character and relation that may serve for positive identification on any theory whatever, even when a large amount of mistake and confusion occurs. On Mr. Podmore's own supposition, whether of "possible" or actual fraud, I would have maintained the same opinion of the meaning, other things being the same, of that failure in the "ordinary clairvoyant's" performances, though I should be very much puzzled to know why any conscious fraud would make such an unnecessary mistake. Mr. Podmore might have indicated what I said about this name and the "communications" of this uncle on pp. 90, 94, and 223. It would also have been well to have remarked what I said in the footnote on p. 240 regarding the possible mistake of Charles for Carruthers.

17. In allusion to "normal channels of information," on p. 376, such as inference and suggestion, Mr. Podmore says: "To this question Professor Hyslop has not addressed himself at all." This is not true. I very carefully "addressed" myself to these theories and rejected them as nonsense. The reader may consult the following references as proof that I explicitly did so, in my Report, pp. 16-17, 124, and especially 247-248. As Mr. Podmore gives no evidence in his review that he had examined what I said between

pp. 124 and 296, he may be able to plead ignorance of my statements.

These mistakes have a humorous aspect for me after Mr. Podmore's animadversions on the manner in which I treated mistakes and fragmentary messages in my Report. I have always been taught to believe that Mr. Podmore could state facts as clearly, as correctly, and as accurately as people usually suppose that incarnate spirits *ought* to communicate through Mrs. Piper's organism. But after all, these numerous mistakes and errors mentioned above and committed by Mr. Podmore, who might have been in a rational state of mind when quoting my Report and writing his review of it, a condition in which the spiritistic hypothesis, as I stated it, does not suppose the communicator to be, I confess that, if I cannot use fragmentary messages and mistakes as evidence of personal identity I must doubt the very existence of the Mr. Podmore that I have believed in, and may be required to believe that some fraudulent writer of very ordinary intelligence has been personating him with less cleverness than the review of my Report supposes was necessary or adequate to explain the messages in that record. It may be that spirits ought to do better, but it is time to be charitable toward them as a "possibility."

## II.

I come next to Mr. Podmore's method of treating the record and the assumptions which he makes without producing evidence that they apply.

1. There are various statements and intimations in Mr. Podmore's review, which the reader may remark for himself, such as the "possibility" that information was or "might be" obtained from outside sources by at least the medium; the "possibility" that chance coincidence, guessing, inference, and suggestion "might" explain much; the manner of reversing the emphasis which my Report placed upon explanatory as compared with evidential problems there discussed, and especially the limitation of his review and argument to the earlier sittings and assumptions of "possible" fraud in connection with the later sittings, though his attitude even here is not consistent, as he is content with a general and unsupported assertion about the application of inference and suggestion to the later séances—these statements and intimations which most apparently show that Mr. Podmore assumed that I was trying to *demonstrate* the spiritistic theory, or primarily to convince the reader

of its truth by dumbfounding the imagination in the exclusion of the "possibility" of fraud, when I distinctly renounced all intention of doing this. They go to show this contention, because all demonstration, in the proper sense of absolute proof, implies the exclusion of alternative possibilities of explanation, as rationally sustained to some extent at least. *An inductive problem does not exclude the recognition of alternative "possibilities," but insists that the entertainment of them shall be accompanied by as much consistent evidence that they are facts in the particular case as is presented for the hypothesis adopted.* This conception of the problem is fundamental to the position consciously taken in my Report and defined for the very purpose of remaining at the inductive point of view until further evidence was obtained, either for refuting Dr. Hodgson and myself, or for better chances to convince the reader.

How careful I was to define the problem that I was investigating and discussing, as both explanatory and evidential, with the emphasis in my Report on the explanatory character of the hypothesis defended, can be seen by consulting the following references to that Report and the *Journal* (pp. 4, footnote, 86, 90, 124, 244-247, 290-294, and especially 295-296 : *Journal S.P.R.*, Vol. x, pp. 213-215). I agree that a hypothesis must have evidence, but it must also explain and be applicable psychologically to the whole case in court and consistently adapted to details without imaginary and unsupported adjunctive suppositions. Now as my explicit statements showed that I was not trying to demonstrate the spiritistic theory, or to convince the reader, but only testing a hypothesis formed on other records and applied to mine with less evidential value, Mr. Podmore ought to have seen that it was as much his duty to give evidence of his hypotheses of inference and suggestion as he thinks it was mine to prove spiritism. If I had professed to demonstrate the spiritistic theory, the mention of alternative "possibilities" not considered by me might have had some respect given them, but as I professedly was dealing with an inductive problem, Mr. Podmore must accept that issue in reviewing the Report, and not demand that I shall look at the problem in his way, without applying his "possible" hypotheses to the record evidentially and in detail. But instead of evidence and detailed application of his theory, he simply asserts that his various hypotheses are "not excluded," that they are "possible," that they "might" explain certain incidents.

Of all the words of tongue or pen  
The saddest are these: it might have been.

I do not understand that scientific work consists or is exhausted in the collection and publication of "might be's."

The reader will now anticipate how I mean to treat Mr. Podmore's playing with the hypotheses of fraud. I simply repeat what I said in my Report on this matter (pp. 5-10). I absolutely refuse to discuss the supposition of it seriously until the issue is squarely faced as I defined it for myself and as the history of the Piper case defines it inductively. I explicitly gave my reasons for taking this position (pp. 5-10: cf. pp. 298, 344-346). The last page and a half of my Report (pp. 295-296) also had the same issue in mind. When Mr. Podmore is prepared to give definite evidence that fraud of any kind is a probable fact in the case, I can take his treatment of the subject with some scientific seriousness.

Mr. Podmore's position regarding fraud is this. The first sitting was a failure, and the second sitting was very poor at least, if not an equal failure. The later sittings are so separated by intervals of time and opportunity to collect information regarding the sitter that their evidential claims are vitiated. His statements on pp. 376 and 388 have no rational meaning except on the assumption that he has conscious detective fraud in mind: for he alludes to "knowledge normally acquired by the medium, either in her waking state from things heard and read," etc., to information "possibly" obtainable "from registers, tombstones, old newspapers, directories, or any other sources," and to the "suspicious mistake" which he imagines "might" be due to consulting an old county history.

Now I shall frankly admit the plausibility of this claim or insinuation by Mr. Podmore that fraud is a factor in my record to be considered, but on the following conditions: (a) If he will show that no adequate attempts have been made in the past previous to my sittings to exclude fraud on Mrs. Piper's part and to show that it was both foreign to her habits and unnecessary to produce the results. (b) If he will apply the hypothesis of fraud to the whole case in detail and give specific evidence for the truth of the adjunctive suppositions necessary to account for these details, including trivialities, mistakes, confusions, automatic writing, the dramatic play of personality, the apparent difference of clearness in the "communicators," the absence of definite time relations in the "communications," and all the psychological peculiarities generally in the case, as well as the omissions of what the hypothesis of fraud would most naturally lead us to expect would be given most easily and without unnecessary expense and trouble in collecting the information. (c) If he will

abandon the admission that there is any "trance intelligence" connected with the Piper phenomena, and show that there is no evidence to support the belief that her trance is genuine. (d) If he will prove, what his method of treating my Report in reality assumes—namely that the Piper and similar phenomena are not to be treated as a whole after reasonable evidence that fraud is not practised, but *de novo* with each new sitting or sitter, and with the liberty to articulate theories as you please whether consistent with each other or not. (e) If he will show that the explanatory problem does not enter into the scientific treatment of the case as a whole, but only his conception of the evidential incidents. (f) If, remembering that this is an *inductive* problem, he will produce specific evidence that there is reason to believe that "registers, tombstones, old newspapers, directories," and similar sources of information, *did* actually supply any one connected with the Piper case with the information contained in the incidents of the "communications" on which I definitely formed my reasons for applying the spiritistic hypothesis to my record. (g) If he will show, after his admission in the review and elsewhere that there is a supernormal faculty indicated in the Piper case, that there is no reason to assume this faculty operative when the *a priori* and imaginary "possibility" of fraud is not excluded from it all the time and from all incidents in the same way, and wherein it is rational for Mrs. Piper, without the collusion of others, to carry on so vast a system of detective agencies as must be assumed to account for the peculiarity of many of the details, with the attendant trouble and expense and so little result, according to the opinion of Mr. Podmore, when it would have been so easy and inexpensive to get far better results, and to avoid mistakes and confusions. When Mr. Podmore has done all these, it will be time to take his reflections as seriously as he does himself.

But how does Mr. Podmore proceed? He makes an allusion to "knowledge normally acquired by the medium," and then goes on to indicate that the result can be explained by inference from my statements and suggestions to Mrs. Piper in the trance state, and so expresses himself as to include this trance state in the conception of "normal." Now the trance is not a "normal" condition, and Mr. Podmore's ambiguous way of speaking has the advantage of suggesting conscious fraud to the reader, while he shelters himself against the accusation that he intends this by taking refuge behind the admission of the trance, and the hypotheses of inference and suggestion. Then after intimating that "these normal channels of

information were possibly wide enough to have conveyed everything in the later séances which was true and relevant," he returns near the close of his review to the idea of detective fraud, and even says that any possible information obtainable from "registers, tombstones," etc., "is to be attributed to such sources." This is abandoning the hypothesis of inference and suggestion from my statements at the sitting. If you are going to assume the "possibility" of conscious fraud, you should explain the latter results by it, and if you are going to explain them by subliminal inferences from suggestions, etc., you must not hint at conscious fraud of the detective type, especially after you have admitted that in the previous history of the case it had been excluded, and that in my case "we may perhaps exclude it," as his treatment of the first two sittings and explanation of results in others by subliminal inference and suggestion alone, and the admission of the trance, show that he does, and must consistently exclude it. Now, if inference and suggestion can explain everything after these two sittings, why did not Mr. Podmore apply these hypotheses evidentially, as my consideration and rejection of them explicitly required him to do, to such incidents as the brown-handled knife with which my father pared his finger nails, the medicines, hyomei and strychnine, black skull cap, the name of Lucy M'Clellan, the name of James M'Clellan, the name Hathaway, the allusion to Swedenborg, and our talk about him, to hallucination, to the experiment with the young woman in connection with her dream, the organ incident in connection with the name of Harper Crawford, the reference to the mortgage, the reference to taxes, the mention of the talk with the principal of the school about my brother George, and to the anxieties of my father, my aunt Nannie, and myself, in connection with this brother, the allusion to war, and the mental anxiety associated with the injury to my father's leg, the horse Tom, and my brother's disposal of him, the name Jerry, the allusion to an organ and the "communicator's" desire to "hear" my sister Lida sing, the fact of my uncle, James M'Clellan, despising the name Jim, the name and relationship of this uncle's brother John, the prediction of this brother's death, and the message of that death afterwards, the incident of the lost finger in the case of John M'Clellan, the sunstroke and the name David connected with it, the allusion to the chimney, and its having been taken down, the allusion to a school in connection with the name Cooper, the relative time of this Cooper's death as compared with my father's, the dog Peter which George had, the tokens, the

mention of excitement on the occasion of my cousin's visit, the names Jennie and Lucy mentioned together, my father's moving west, and the visit to my brother just before this move, and many others which it would unnecessarily swell this list to mention? I have given this large list for the reader to decide for himself how utterly preposterous Mr. Podmore's unsupported assertion is. You may account for them by detective fraud if you like, but this is not inference, chance coincidence, or suggestion. The fact is that Mr. Podmore, in making his assertion, confuses the conditions of fraud with those for inference and suggestion, when the two theories do not consist with each other in application to the same facts.

(2) In spite of the fact that Mr. Podmore, on p. 376, says that we "may perhaps exclude fraud," remarking at the same time that we cannot equally "exclude chance coincidence, skilful inference, and the reproduction of information casually acquired," a few pages later (p. 380), coming to the same situation, he says of fraud, "clearly that possibility is not one which we can altogether exclude." This position he apparently reserves as a vantage ground in case the other assumptions are laughed out of court. Then he proceeds to discuss the first and second sittings in a manner to suppose the "possibility" of conscious fraud, chance coincidence, and inference from suggestion, etc. Now the application of all these hypotheses to the same data is either superfluous or contradictory. He assumes that, in the first sitting, I had excluded the opportunity for conscious fraud, and that chance will account for all that occurred in that sitting. He limits his treatment of facts, however, to the proper names in that sitting, and neglects all the incidents which had influenced my mind to consider it as psychologically connected with later sittings, and to treat it as "slightly evidential" of the supernatural, though not of spirits when taken alone. Now there are two things which rather discredit the easy application of chance, even to this sitting. The first is the group of facts associated with my brother Charles, namely, the relationship to me, the reference to his fever, to his "bad throat," to his decease many years ago, to his passing away in the winter, and to the remembrance of seeing snow on the ground. The mention of typhoid fever was wrong, but this was spontaneously corrected in a later sitting without any suggestion from me that he was wrong. Besides, there were several other true incidents mentioned by this "communicator" apparently, but those just given, as there was no fishing or suggestion, are beyond chance, however you may prefer to account for them. The second



fact is that the proper names in this sitting are grouped in a way to suggest that chance is not the supposition to account for them. Five names coming close together, and associated with the "communicator," whom I would not recognise, were all irrelevant to me, and all the relevant names in the main correct, near the close of the sitting, applied to me.

Now, when it comes to the second sitting, Mr. Podmore tries the hypothesis of guessing and inference to account for what he wrongly supposes, against my definite statement to the contrary, to have been intended for my full name, and in the remark that "the medium had had the opportunity of passing in review the events of the first sitting, and the names of likely sitters," virtually implies the disposition to conscious fraud on her part affecting the trance utterances, so that we have a hypothesis which makes guessing and inference absurd, as these applied to the case assume previous ignorance of the sitter. Now in his reference to the first sitting, Mr. Podmore says that "the precautions taken against the discovery of his (my) identity seem to have been pretty complete." He does not seem to have remarked that I had a sitting with Mrs. Piper in 1892, the record of which is published in my report before him (p. 297). To many persons it would seem impossible after that to exclude the "possibility" of conscious fraud, and those who believe in large supernormal powers the fact would settle the probability of my identity at the outset. In fact, I dispute Mr. Podmore's statement from the standpoint of "possible" fraud which he flirts with. I took the precaution of wearing the mask mainly, as I indicated explicitly (p. 12), to be able to say so and answer the first objection of the scientific plebs, among whom Mr. Podmore is apparently willing to be classed, and not to exclude the "possibility" of fraud. There are all sorts of ways in which I can "imagine" that Mrs. Piper "could" have ascertained my identity at the first sitting, or have known that it was I that had the engagement. My treatment of fraud showed clearly enough that I so considered the matter, and my full notes indicated the same (pp. 11, 298-299, 344-346). I make bold to say that, personally, I had no objections at the time to Mrs. Piper's knowing who I was, as I had previously been convinced that fraud was not the hypothesis to account for the facts in the case, and went solely to test the hypothesis which Mr. Podmore considers "possibly" sufficient to explain all the true and relevant incidents in later sittings. I explicitly said so (p. 12). I think that every intelligent man will agree with the judgment that the

results absolutely prove that chance coincidence, skilful inference, and suggestion are excluded from the account in the explanation of the facts. I can appreciate this claim for a few of the sittings, even when I do not agree with it, but it was certainly incumbent on Mr. Podmore, after his minute examination of the first two sittings, to test his suppositions, that he should show how the same hypothesis could apply to the specific and complicated incidents of later sittings, and not content himself with a mere assertion. The situation was one for Mr. Podmore to press the "possibility" of conscious fraud, if he wished to worry the spiritistic believer, since he could make the most of the time over which the sittings were distributed, and not to commit himself to so absurd a proposition as inference, chance coincidence, and suggestion for matter so palpably impossible on those hypotheses as the later sittings.

(3) Mr. Podmore's serious and elaborate discussion of the statistical summary, particularly in his limitation of the illustrations to the sittings which he chose, shows that he either does not understand the problem we are investigating, or did not notice what I had said about the summary in the most explicit manner (pp. 116-118). I regard the statistical treatment of the problem involved in the Piper case as sheer nonsense, and indicated as much in the discussion of it, intimating that I had made the table for the "statistically inclined person." The problem before me was a *psychological* not a *mathematical* one. No one would think of applying mathematics or statistical methods of this kind to the evidence in a murder case. But it was necessary to throw a delusive sop to some of our experimental psychologists who have a great friendliness for figures. If all the "incidents" had contained but one "factor" in an isolated situation, there might be some apparent plausibility and excuse for statistics. But even this would be pertinent only in the consideration of chance coincidence, and not to any other theory. "Skilful inference and reproduction of information casually acquired" are not suitable hypotheses to be tested in any such way. Much less would the statistical method apply to synthetic "incidents" such as those on which I laid the whole stress of the argument. One complex "incident" might outweigh a hundred mistakes or false statements of the single kind.

Let me take up special points in the review of the statistical summary. (a) The hypotheses of chance and fraud are absolutely incompatible with each other when applied to the same data. Fraud implies knowledge of some sort and chance excludes it. You appeal

to fraud only when you tacitly admit the striking and intelligent character of your fact, and to chance when this is not so. If Mr. Podmore had confined his statistical study to the first sitting in the record, there might have been some plausible excuse for what he says of chance as applied to it. But his proper procedure was, according to his admission, that "the precautions taken against the discovery of his (my) identity seem to have been pretty complete" in the first séance, to apply chance coincidence to this first sitting; and unless the same security against my identification is not admitted in the second sitting, to exclude it from that, if he wants to apply fraud in connection with it, as he says that even the "possibility" of conscious fraud has not been excluded from it. That either or both conscious and unconscious fraud is applied to this second sitting is evidenced by what is said about my full name, and the "possibility" of this sort of thing is said to increase with the later experiments. Yet in his application of the statistical summary which deals with the matter as a whole, not in detail or in single incidents, he applies chance, not only to the second sitting in the first series, but also to the first sitting in Dr. Hodgson's series in my behalf more than a month later. Now, considering that inference—whether consciously made from data obtained by "passing in review the events of the first sitting," or subliminally made from data, however acquired, admitting as Mr. Podmore does, that Mrs. Piper's trance intelligence is unique—is a fraud of some kind, we see that Mr. Podmore's endeavour is to apply fraud and chance to the same data. *Carthago est delenda*, whether the policy is consistent or not, seems to be Mr. Podmore's motto. (b) If Mr. Podmore had remarked the fact which I stated in my report, that I had the same security against identification, so far as the mask was concerned, and independently of detective agencies, at the second as at the first of my sittings, he might have claimed some immunity in the application of chance to it. But he would be obliged to exclude fraud of all sorts from it, whether conscious or subliminal. Granting, however, that the circumstances admit this application of chance, the case of Dr. Hodgson's sitting would still remain unequivocally against him, according to his supposition that the "possibility" of fraud increases with the number and postponement of the experiments, and the statement that "skilful inference" by this "unique intelligence" explains "everything in the later séances that was true and relevant." (c) Mr. Podmore ought to have seen that I was consistent and correct in the exclusion of chance from consideration when it is remarked

as the evidence of the record shows, that I had intimated as much "possibility" of fraud in my first sitting as in others, that I had considered guessing, fishing, inference, and suggestion, and rejected them on evidence, and that I insisted on my treating the Piper case as a whole. (d) Mr. Podmore bases his treatment of these sittings in their statistical aspect, applying chance to the "factors," not to the "incidents," that is, to the mathematical, not to the psychological view of the question. He expressly isolates the proper names in these sittings from all contextual considerations and incidents, and does not even mention the fact of contextual relation in his summary of the facts, and treats the proper names as if they were the important feature, when I explicitly said that I attached no superior value to them (pp. 21, 173). He simply omits to remark for the reader the synthetic "incidents" such as I have mentioned above as associated with my brother Charles in the first sitting, as good as any that led to identification in Appendix IV., and the unity between the whole series, to which I called attention, and on which I had based my opinion of the suggestiveness of the two sittings. (e) The difficulties which Mr. Podmore encounters in the comparison of his reckoning in the statistical summary with mine are fully explained in the footnote (p. 115) which he apparently has not remarked. I leave this to the reader. The case is not based on the "factors," but on synthetic "incidents," and I was careful to explain why I even mentioned the "factors," to which I attached and attach no importance other than that indicated. It is not the mere counting of correct and false "factors," or "incidents" even, that determines this problem, but the question of psychological unity and relevance in regard to the personal identity of the persons, either actually present or masquerading as such in secondary personality, that determines the way the facts should be treated.

4. Mr. Podmore says: "The intelligence which inspires those messages, whatever its precise nature, is certainly complex, and of an unusual, if not unique kind." This is said apparently with other records of the same case in view; for he begins the paragraph with the statement: "In considering generally from the evidential standpoint the utterances of Mrs. Piper's later séances," etc., in which the implication is reasonably distinct that he includes in his "evidential standpoint" at least the whole of the Imperator régime, so far as published, and none of the detailed records even of this have yet been published for any one's inspection. Let me note the following. (a) If you are going to isolate my record from previous accounts of the

Piper case in discussing the spiritistic hypothesis, the same must be done in regard to every other. You cannot isolate it, as Mr. Podmore does, in order to disqualify spiritism and then connect it with the larger whole to prove or illustrate an "unusual if not unique" intelligence. (b) If "later séances" include mine, this "unusual if not unique" intelligence is admitted there and it is either not consistent or not necessary to play with "possible" fraud, inference and suggestion, as is done. These are very simple affairs in the "ordinary professional clairvoyants." It is because they are not unusual or unique that the appeal to them has so much force with the public and with the scientific mind. But once grant a unique intelligence not defined, and a supernormal faculty as proved in the Piper case at large, which is admitted by Mr. Podmore, and assume also, as he does, that the trance condition, in connection with which this supernormal faculty is usually found, prevailed at my sittings, and you forfeit the right to suggest without producing evidence suspicions and "possibilities" on the ordinary grounds. (c) What is the use, after granting such an intelligence, and after showing reasonable evidence that the ordinary methods of mediums are not employed by Mrs. Piper, of talking about fraud, etc., *in abstracto*, as if our only duty was to perpetually test the ordinary hypotheses? When you have once shown that there are facts which these do not explain, and therefore that the unity of the case includes the less evidential situations, and that all reasonable criteria for the exclusion of the ordinary methods of fraud, etc., have been satisfied, we then, in every other scientific investigation, proceed to examine and discuss the case as a whole, and in the Piper phenomena the psychological analysis of the record has its place. When we have once found that our machine works rightly under test conditions, we do not go on testing it perpetually in the same way. We put it to its proper work. "Das beständige Wetzen der Messer ist langweilig wenn man Nichts zu schneiden vorhat."

5. Mr. Podmore evidently attaches much importance to proper names. This is indicated by the stress laid by him on the failure to get them at all in some instances and on getting them imperfectly in others. Here is where I think he entirely misses the problem as I defined it for myself and as I think the spiritistic theory requires it to be conceived. Proper names are not the most important evidence for a spiritistic theory. They are too easily explicable by fraud to have any primary significance in evidential matters. In the psychological question they have only two considerations of interest

in favour of getting them at all. Firstly, they are corroborative of other and better testimony, and so afford a cumulative value. Secondly, they present the definite clue to the segregation of personalities involved in the "communications," on any theory whatsoever, and to the discovery of the person whose identity may be concerned when the sitter does not know the facts. The real evidential crux consists in those synthetic "incidents" which have a direct psychological bearing upon the personal identity of a deceased person and against the probability of that selective telepathy from the memory of the living, for which there is as yet no adequate scientific evidence. Proper names cannot supply this *quaesitum*. That they are not this and that they are not absolutely necessary to prove personal identity is apparent from the experiments recorded in Appendix iv. of my Report. When this is read with due care, it will be observed that I refused to permit the names and relationship of communicators to be identified to be sent to receivers of the message, except in one instance and that for a purpose, so that both names and relationships had no place in the identification of personality. The result might be studied with some interest to Mr. Podmore and his point of view.

6. Mr. Podmore takes serious exception to my use of confused and fragmentary messages as evidence of personal identity. I laid stress on them purposely, because there is no excuse for this character in them on any of the hypotheses which Mr. Podmore makes so much of. They are against fraud, chance, inference and suggestion, especially in the form in which they usually occur. If he had studied Appendix iv, as I intended every scientific reader to do, he would have found there a definite anticipation and answer to the difficulty which troubles him. I had purposely constructed these incoherent and fragmentary messages to test the very question which Mr. Podmore raises. Pp. 586-590 show occasional instances in which fragmentary messages succeeded well and the most specific and clear messages failed. The same phenomenon is observable in this record between pp. 608 and 623 inclusive. I called special attention to this fact on p. 268 of my report, and italicised one very interesting instance bearing upon the point at issue, namely, "Question 7, p. 619." It must be remembered that these experiments represented communications, most of them telegraphic, between living persons where we knew both ends of the line.

7. I must note a number of important omissions by Mr. Podmore which affect the accuracy of his representation of my Report. (a) He does not tell the reader that I took precisely the same view

of the proper names in the first sitting, considered individually (pp. 21, 173), that he takes in a criticism which seems to imply that I had not done so. (b) In regard to such reconstructions as the incident of "the trip to the lake after leaving the camp," he does not tell the reader that I condemned them as emphatically as he does, and I did so right in connection with what he quotes. (c) He omits to tell the reader that I explicitly rejected the statement about the curved-handled cane with the initials in the end as non-evidential and as having "little or no importance" (p. 61). I classed the incident as false in the statistical summary, though it may not be strictly so, but because I could not call it either true or indeterminate in the proper sense of the terms as defined. (d) Mr. Podmore omits all reference to and discussion of the synthetic incidents on which I specifically laid the whole stress of my argument as the primary psychological question in the spiritistic hypothesis (pp. 158-176), and confines his attention generally to the simple, false, and confused incidents which I had expressly repudiated as unimportant and non-evidential, without telling the reader that I had recognised this apparent objection, and then claims that he has fairly represented the whole. (e) He does not even allude to the dramatic play of personality and my discussion of it, though he admits the fact of Mrs. Piper's trance intelligence. This dramatic play is a psychological phenomenon of some importance on any theory whatsoever, whether of the spiritistic or non-spiritistic sort, and must be made intelligible as a functional and integral part of the whole, and must be as explicable by chance, inference, and suggestion as the apparently evidential incidents, if you do not expressly add the supposition of peculiarly fiendish form of secondary personality to these processes. (f) He omits all reference to my discussion of "Mistakes and Confusions" and the reasons for treating them as I did. They too must be rationally accounted for on the hypotheses which Mr. Podmore proposes, if they are to have any standing in court. The problem is not a mere matter of counting the true and false statements of Mrs. Piper's trance intelligence or of other mediums, but it is a problem of explaining the correct and incorrect statements and confusions by the same general theory with the proper adjuncts from normal and abnormal psychology, which may be fairly assumed in the case.

In conclusion I have only to say that, as I think no intelligent reader of my record will accept chance coincidence, inference, and suggestion without conscious detective fraud as an adequate explana-

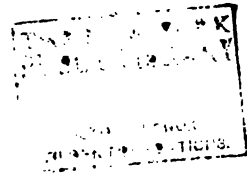
tion of the later sittings and incidents, Mr. Podmore would have done better to have pressed the supposition of fraud as the only rational escape from spiritism or some omniscient telepathy. I should not argue against the hypothesis of conscious and detective fraud. It is better not to have any theory at all than to propose such preposterous and unsupported suppositions as Mr. Podmore entertains. We are not obliged to have explanations. It is open to us to say that we do not know, or that we are not convinced, or that the case is not proven.











PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
Society for Psychical Research.  
PART XLVII.  
JANUARY, 1904.

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PROCEEDINGS OF GENERAL MEETINGS.

THE 120th General Meeting of the Society was held in the Hall at 20 Hanover Square, London, W., on Thursday, June 18th, 1903, at 4.30 p.m.; the PRESIDENT, SIR OLIVER LODGE, in the chair.

Addresses on Mr. Myers' "Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death" were delivered by MR. ANDREW LANG, DR. WALTER LEAF, and the PRESIDENT. These have since been published in the *Proceedings*, Part XLVI.

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The 121st General Meeting was held in the same place on Monday, November 2nd, 1903, at 5 p.m.; SIR WILLIAM CROOKES in the chair.

PROFESSOR W. F. BARRETT read a paper on "Further Experiments on Dowsing and some Considerations thereon," which will, it is hoped, appear in a future Part of the *Proceedings*.

## I.

ON THE TYPES OF PHENOMENA DISPLAYED IN  
MRS. THOMPSON'S TRANCE.

BY J. G. PIDDINGTON.

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## (1) INTRODUCTION.

IN the records of sittings with Mrs. Thompson, published in Part XLIV. of the *Proceedings*, it was indicated that several omissions were made. Very little of the matter thus omitted was connected with the main trend of the communications intended for the sitter immediately concerned; most of it had no reference to or interest for the person attending the sitting, and consisted chiefly of remarks casually and parenthetically interposed by Nelly (Mrs. Thompson's usual "control"), and to have retained them in their proper place in the record would only have interrupted and confused the main narrative.

I propose to rescue these omitted passages from an oblivion that in my opinion they do not deserve; and I shall also make use of some material taken from some unpublished records of sittings, and also of certain impressions received by Mrs. Thompson when in a normal state, or, at least, when she was not in trance.

Dr. Hodgson has expressed the opinion that, on the occasions when he was present at sittings with Mrs. Thompson, she was simulating a state of trance. He has confined his expression of opinion to the six sittings which he attended, and has not said that he thinks that the trance is always fraudulently assumed; nor, indeed, do I understand that such is his real belief. I am not at all surprised that Mrs. Thompson's trance should not have impressed Dr. Hodgson as genuine. So easy, and sudden, so entirely unannounced, as a rule, is the transition from the medium's waking to her entranced state, and, except on rare occasions, so free from any, at least apparent, physical discomfort, and so alert her attention and behaviour during the trance that to one accustomed to Mrs. Piper's trance Mrs. Thompson might well appear to be shamming.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his recent work, *Hypnotism: Its History, Practice and Theory*, Dr. J. Milne Bramwell maintains that, in some cases where only the very slightest hypnosis has been induced, and even where no certain trace of it has been detected, suggestion yields therapeutic results as striking as in the case of patients who have been

But not only to one accustomed to the deep and dramatic form of trance displayed by Mrs. Piper might Mrs. Thompson's trance be unconvincing, but also to one who, having had but little experience of mediumistic trances, was biassed by preconceived notions of what a trance ought to be. Thus after my first sitting I wrote to Mr. Myers as follows:

"As to the genuineness of her trance I have not enough experience to pronounce an opinion of any value. . . . The merely external characteristics of the trance could certainly be simulated by anybody." Later on I was convinced of the genuineness of the trance partly by the content of the trance-communications and partly by the fact that during the not brief period of my acquaintance with Mrs. Thompson I have never detected what on reflection I felt could be regarded as a suspicious overlapping of her normal by her trance memory.

I do not intend to discuss here the genuineness of Mrs. Thompson's trance; but, as reference has been made to the question, it may be of interest to quote a letter addressed to me by Professor James in answer to my enquiries about an experiment which I knew that he had made with a view to testing whether Mrs. Thompson when entranced was insensible to pain. Professor James writes as follows:

"Our conception of 'trance' is anything but definite, and I know of no test of genuineness.

"Anæsthesia may not be a sure sign of it; and if it were a sign it might, within limits, be easily feigned.

"Failure of pupils to react to light has been used to prove the genuineness of hypnotic trance, and so have other neural oddities. They certainly would prove an unfeigned and *abnormal state*. The altered speech and the amnesia<sup>1</sup> are what are *understood* by medium trance. Insensibility to *violent* pain being with difficulty simulable, it would, if found, be presumptive proof that the altered personality and amnesia were also unsimulated.

deeply hypnotised. Thus the view that the exercise of supernormal faculty need not be accompanied by either profound or even slight trance would fall into line with Dr. Bramwell's observations if, with Myers, we attribute both response to curative suggestions, and supernormal faculties generally to the activities of the subliminal consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> It will appear later that complete amnesia does not obtain in Mrs. Thompson's case.

"I subjected Mrs. T[hompson] to no violent pain, merely pricked her lips and hands with a pin, without warning. Her demeanour might have been feigned, but I doubt or disbelieve it. It tallies with the demeanour of Flournoy's case, and combines with the general impression of sincerity which I receive from Mrs. T[hompson]."

I have never attempted any pain test with Mrs. Thompson; and indeed in any case if she were shown to be not insensible to violent pain when in trance, it would only prove that anaesthesia was absent, and not that the trance was feigned.

There is, however, besides Professor W. James' experiment, one other item of evidence which goes to show that Mrs. Thompson's trance may be accompanied by anaesthesia, and the case is none the less interesting because the anaesthesia would seem to have been accompanied by the exercise of supernatural faculty. I am indebted to Mr. Norman Reeve, L.D.S. (London) of Bennett's Hill, Birmingham, for the account which follows. Although posted on May 10th, 1899, and so dated, it was written on May 9th within half-an-hour of the incident with which it deals, and was addressed to the lady who is now his wife, together with a covering letter in which Mr. Reeve wrote:—"I shall deal at some length with the visit on Monday to show that Mrs. Thompson and her sister were strangers to me." In a letter addressed to me on November 12th, 1903, Mr. Reeve writes:—"I have enclosed the letters and envelopes accompanying [the account] with postmarks May 10, 1899. You will see by the tone of the narrative that the effect on me was neither slight nor transient."

MR. REEVE'S NARRATIVE:

*May 10th, 1899.*

On Monday morning [i.e. May 8th, 1899] I had an appointment with Mrs. Arter from 1.30 till 3—at 3 o'clock one with Annie Reeve. At 1 o'clock a telegram came from Mrs. Arter saying she regretted she was unable to come. At 1.15 two strangers called, sisters I afterwards found out; one of them, a Mrs. Thompson, wanted some work done, and had come in quite by chance. I took them into the surgery . . . Mrs. Thompson . . . placed herself in my hands, asked me to decide what was necessary to stop a couple of her teeth with. Gold was required for one and a cement for the other; this



I told her would be the best. . . . Mrs. Thompson . . . said although she had had no breakfast she would have the gold filling put in there and then. I proceeded at once with the work . . . after I had been working about a quarter of an hour I noticed that Mrs. Thompson's eyes had become fixed, that she was entirely oblivious of anything that was going on. I asked if anything was the matter, and was she well? She pulled herself together and assured me she was all right, and by 1.45 I had finished the operation. . . . I made another appointment for Tuesday at 11, and they left at 1.50 by my surgery clock. At 2.50 my cousin Annie came in.

The next morning [*i.e.* Tuesday, May 9th, 1899] Mrs. Thompson came in alone. The first words she said as she entered the room were, "Oh, Mr. Reeve, I did so want to ask you yesterday: have you any relation named Annie Reeve?" I told her if she had asked last Friday I should have said no, but since I had seen and heard of her for the first time. "Well," she said, "I used to go to school with an Annie Reeve, and yesterday as I sat in your chair her figure appeared before me as plainly as I see you now."<sup>1</sup> . . . I was . . . absolutely dumfounded, but within two minutes I had so far recovered as to be determined to sift the matter absolutely to the bottom. . . . "Do you think," she said, "if I described the clothes she wore, you would recognise her from the description?" I answered that from peculiar circumstances I could tell every garment she had on from "top to toe, from head to foot"; for, as you know, after our discussion at Solihull on Saturday I should take notice of everything she wore when I saw her on Monday. "Well, she said," "the form that appeared to me in this room was dressed in a tailor-made jacket, loose fitting, open at the front, wearing a stand-up collar, and a necktie tied in a sailor knot." I had by this time ceased to be astonished, and told her that although she had described the garments fairly well, she had not given the jacket its proper title. She said that it had no other description as far as she knew. I then told her it was a sack-back jacket. She then said as "she had only seen the figure from the front she was unable to see to tell the cut at the back."

Her next question was: when did I see Annie Reeve last? and I was obliged to admit that the very next person who entered the room after she had left was Annie Reeve herself. Mrs. Thompson went out at 1.50; Annie Reeve came in at 2.50.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Thompson then explained why she did not speak of her experience at the time, *i.e.* on the Monday. Her reason is borne out by statements contained in Mr. Reeve's full account, which have been omitted on account of their private character.

She asked for corroboration on my part, and I opened my appointment-book and showed her "Miss Reeve—3 o'clock."

I proceeded with the rest of the work for her in the ordinary way, and after I had finished we had half-an-hour's chat. She then told me it was nothing new to her to have these metaphysical experiences. . . .

(Signed)     NORMAN REEVE.

Mr. Reeve had originally sent an account of the episode to Mr. Myers. It could not, however, be found among his papers, and I, not thinking that Mr. Reeve would have preserved any contemporaneous note of the incident, asked Mrs. Thompson to write me out her recollections of it. Her reply was as follows:—

*Nov. 3rd, 1903.*

In reply to your letter of to-day's date, I have not the account of my visit to the dentist, Norman Reeve, L.D.S., Bennett's Hill, Birmingham, but I have done my best to write out my account of this affair. I think it is a great pity the letter from Mr. Reeve cannot be found, as it was written within a few days (or weeks at most) of the whole thing happening, and a business man like Mr. Reeve might not care to be bothered to write another. However, I will write out as best I can all that took place. It is more than strange that the stopping of this *very tooth* has come out during these last three weeks, and, as I thought of running down to Birmingham for a night, I was going to call and have it replaced if he [*i.e.* Mr. Reeve] is still at Bennett's Hill; but now I think it would be wiser for me to keep away, if you intend to investigate the case, as I have no desire to be the one to refresh Mr. Reeve's mind. I think it would be better for someone else to call. I am afraid my account is rather jumbled.

MRS. THOMPSON'S ACCOUNT.

*Written from memory, November 3rd, 1903.*

I cannot remember the date, but probably 4 years ago I went to Birmingham to visit my sister, and wrote a letter the day or so before to my usual dentist making an appointment. This letter was returned to me "Gone, left no address." When I arrived in Birmingham my sister met me, and I suggested, as I had a troublesome

tooth I must at once have stopped, we should go and find a dentist. We walked across New Street to Bennett's Hill. (The rooms of nearly all the dentists are in this street, or were, years ago.) Two or three doors up on the right-hand side we spied a brass-plate with Mr. Reeve's name, etc. I said: "Oh! this will do; 'L.D.S. London' can surely settle my tooth," and we went inside.

I also attended the next day, and I am not sure if the following took place the first or second visit, but I think the first. When the dentist began to work upon the tooth it hurt very much,<sup>1</sup> but I thought I must try to imagine I had no pain. I suppose he went on just the same, but I felt nothing until I was roused by his hand on my shoulder, and heard him say: "What's the matter?" I told him I had been making myself proof against feeling any pain,<sup>2</sup> and he laughed and said: "I wondered what was the matter with you, as I know I was hurting you, and you were so still."

What really happened was this:—Directly I became insensible to the pain I saw a young lady dressed (I remember this very well) in a tailor-made grey coat and skirt, and a linen collar.

The name, Annie Reeve, came into my mind, as when I went to boarding-school at Much Wenlock my first half-term was Annie Reeve's last half-term; and I felt certain this was the Annie Reeve I had known at school, though I had never seen or heard of the girl except just that half-term 14 years before, and did not recognise the face. I asked Mr. Reeve if he had a relative A. R., and so on; and if she was still living and [if her] name [was] still A. Reeve. He said: "Yes, she is my cousin, and was the last patient I attended to before<sup>3</sup> you came in, and was dressed exactly as you describe." Mr. R. looked it up in his book and showed me the entry; and no

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Reeve writes on November 10th, 1903:—"I filled a left upper central tooth with gold for Mrs. T. At first the patient appeared very sensitive to the pain occasioned by cutting away the dentine, but quite suddenly appeared oblivious of everything going on, so much so that when the operation was finished I had to gently shake her."

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Verrall has described to me how under similar circumstances at her dentist's she has been able by an effort of will to render herself insensible to pain. The parrots who defend their want of interest or belief in psychic faculties with a "But what's the use of it all?" might have to learn a new cry if this kind of self-induced anæsthesia became common.

<sup>3</sup> This should really be "the next patient I attended to *after* you left yesterday." It will be noticed that the story has *not* improved with keeping, but the reverse, as I believe is often the case. Contemporaneous records cut

doubt he still has the book. I can positively declare I did not see A. R. in or out of the dentist's rooms, and if I met her to-day I should not know her, and I thought it was the name Reeve which suggested to me the name A. R. as that of the girl in grey. It was *not* because I recognised her in any normal way. After all this long rigmarole the points are:—

Does Mr. R. remember writing to *me* for Mr. Myers? and if so, does he remember what he said about my not feeling the pain? and also does he remember the tailor-made dress and linen collar? and, last but not least, does he remember me and my trumpery tooth-stopping?

(Signed) R. THOMPSON.

I shall throughout this paper assume the *bona fides* of Mrs. Thompson's trance, and at the same time I shall abstain from discussing the source of the trance communications, and confine myself to describing what took place and to explaining, in certain instances, my reasons for thinking that there is evidence for the acquisition of knowledge in some supernormal manner. But as the record of any observer, however desirous to be scrupulously accurate and fair, may be affected by the view that he may take of the phenomena which he is observing, I think I ought to state what my view of these phenomena is.

No theory of them satisfies me.

Thus negatively only can I state my view. And I can perhaps best indicate my position by confessing that after repeated revisions of what I had written, I have given up the attempt to define my opinions in despair. I do not halt between two opinions, but I shilly-shally between many: so much so that I hesitate to dignify such vacillation with the name of "suspense of judgment."

Though, as I have said, not avoiding critical discussion of particular incidents, my paper is chiefly devoted to an attempted classification of the phenomena. Such a method is

both ways: they check exuberance, but also 'rationalisation.' I submitted Mrs. Thompson's account to Mr. Reeve, *before* he discovered his contemporaneous notes, and he both confirmed and repeated Mrs. Thompson's error. The contemporary account makes it quite clear that Miss Reeve's visit did not precede but followed Mrs. Thompson's by an hour.

naturally open to the objection that I may have twisted, misinterpreted, or selected my material to suit conclusions which I wished to reach. I can only say that I have not done so consciously, and that I pursued my study of the records with no theoretic axe to grind. The more thorough my acquaintance with the facts grew, the more convinced became my belief in their authenticity; and what had once struck me as awkward and suspicious inconsistencies, now, as a result of a careful sifting of the evidence (and not, I venture to hope, because I have talked myself round into a credulous acquiescence), do so no longer. That from this process of classification an unforced and reasonable consistency has emerged—such as would not have emerged had the phenomena been fraudulent—is the underlying, though often unexpressed argument of this paper. I am perhaps open to attack for not publishing in full the evidence with which I deal. In defence of this omission I would urge that, though I do not by any means consider that there is yet a sufficient mass of evidence, or evidence of sufficiently various origin, to place the existence of supernormal faculty beyond cavil or doubt, yet there is enough, both generally and in Mrs. Thompson's particular case, to create a strong presumption in its favour, and to justify an attack being made on the problem from a different standpoint from heretofore.

Finally, I would repeat that I have been specially on my guard against selecting evidence in favour of any particular theory of the phenomena, and against suppressing any evidence which might be held to tell against the integrity of the medium.

The first I heard of Mrs. Thompson was through Mr. Myers, who wrote to ask if some sentences read by her in a crystal had any meaning for me. At that time I did not even know of the existence of Mrs. Thompson, and I have no reason to doubt, and every reason to believe her statement that she was then equally unaware of my existence.

I give below Mrs. Thompson's own account of the incident, prepared for Mr. Myers at his request. (I should explain that at the time when this incident occurred my surname was Smith.)

It opens with the copy of a letter addressed by Mrs. Thompson to Mr. Myers on November 8th, 1898:

"About 11.15 this morning I heard a little voice tell me to look in the crystal. I say a little voice, but I could better describe it as a very weak adult voice, which was quite strange to me; and as I was very busy sewing, I must say I rather resented the suggestion of spending my time crystal-gazing.

The voice insisted—at least, I may say, commanded me. It said: 'Put away that work and take for my friend a message.'

I did so, and taking up the crystal I saw perfectly the following; altogether I was from 11.25 to 12.35 getting the whole of the letters. They were in large 'block' capitals, without any attempt at division into words.

[The letters, transcribed in the order in which they appeared—though this was without division into words or spacing—formed the following sentences:]

'You cough like Noel Smith's a[c]quaintance, that queer old buffer doctor J. G. Walker. I am still eccentric, and keep my eye on eccentric folk. His feet are better than mine, but not his boots, eh Siwel.'

I sent above to Mr. F. W. H. Myers, who with me thought the whole thing a stupid senseless message.

When Mr. Myers was having a talk with Nelly on November 10th, she said to him: "Mr. J. G. Smith of Sloane Street will know about that muddled message, which is from a clergyman named Lewis."

That Mr. Myers had such a friend or that such a man as J. G. Smith lived in Sloane Street was quite unknown to me.

Mr. Myers had such a friend, and wrote and sent on the message. This is the reply from Mr. J. G. Smith:

"I understand this is a confused message from a clergyman named Lewis—(is it E. H. Lewis, or H. E. Lewis, or is eh simply 'eh'?) and has some reference to me.

Probably on Monday the 7th of November, or possibly on Tuesday the 8th, about 11 a.m. my wife went to see a Dr. de Noé Walker. . . . He is not her, or my, regular doctor, but she consults him occasionally, but I have never seen him, though I have heard a great deal about him from my wife and other people.

He is an exceedingly clever but eccentric homœopathic doctor.

He was strongly recommended to my wife's brother-in-law, who in turn recommended him to my wife.

Although he could have had one of the finest practices in London, he will only see a few people, mostly poor governesses, etc., to whom he charges no fee, and a few people whom he charges 10s. a visit simply as a protection. . . . His house is a veritable museum of pictures, statuettes, etc., mostly Italian. . . . His house is also a regular 'Zoo' of cats and birds, who are his first thought in life. When my wife went to see him at the beginning of this week she met him in the street feeding his birds. Whereupon he said: 'You go inside. I'll attend to you when I've fed my birds.'

He wears no socks, wears a red flannel shirt à la Garibaldi, over which he sometimes throws a curious kind of cloak. He wears no boots, but some peculiar kind of slipper.

I need hardly add that he is as eccentric as a man can well be. You will note that in order to read *De Noé Walker* into the text one must substitute *De Noé* for *Noel*, and join to it the *Walker* which occurs further down the sentence. [And the initials J. G. must be transposed and conjoined with the surname Smith.]

My wife knows nothing special about his cough.

'Queer old buffer' and 'eccentric' suit admirably; the reference to feet and boots is perhaps to be explained by what I have said above.

I know no clergyman named Lewis, but perhaps Dr. *De Noé Walker* may have known one. I shouldn't dare to go and ask him, . . . but next time my wife goes to see him I will ask her to make enquiries.

The doctor is not an acquaintance of mine, though it can be said that I am acquainted with him."

Dr. Walker died before I screwed up my courage to ask him if he had known an eccentric clergyman of the name of Lewis. (If any member of the S.P.R. can supply the desired information, will he kindly communicate it to me?) Assuming that the coincidences between the crystal-message, Nelly's explanatory comment on that message, and the real facts are not accidental (and I for one cannot regard them as such), two solutions only suggest themselves to me: (1) That in some ordinary way Mrs. Thompson got to know of my wife's visits to Dr. Walker, and reproduced this information in the

crystal-message; (2) that the information was conveyed to her in some supernatural way through the crystal.

The former alternative seems to me improbable. I think it most unlikely that Mrs. Thompson could have learnt of any connection between myself and Dr. Walker. I can't give my reasons; I even doubt if I could define them clearly to myself, let alone make them clear to other people, but anyhow that is my opinion.

But suppose that this odd scrap of information had reached Mrs. Thompson accidentally, it is vastly more probable that she would have learnt, not of my indirect connection with Dr. Walker, but of my wife's immediate connection with him.

Is it possible that she learnt the facts correctly in her normal state, and then muddled them in the crystal-vision version? Possible, but not very probable, I think, for Nelly, who is aware of the crystal-vision, though she put Mr. Myers on the right tack for obtaining verification, doesn't clear up the muddle, and Nelly seems, as I shall show later, to have no difficulty in reproducing fully and clearly in the trance facts known to Mrs. Thompson.

But Mrs. Thompson may have concocted this muddled crystal-message with deliberate cunning, and with a view to divert suspicions which might have been felt if the real facts had been given with perfect accuracy. Well, if any one likes to adopt that theory, I can't disprove it; only I would recall some words written by Professor William James about Mrs. Piper (see *Proceedings*, Vol. VI., p. 656): "If it be suggested that all this was but a refinement of cunning, for that such skilfully distributed reticences are what bring most credit to a medium, I must deny the proposition *in toto*. I have seen and heard enough of sittings to be sure that a medium's trump-cards are promptitude and completeness in her revelations. It is a mistake in general (however it may occasionally, as now, be cited in her favour) to keep back anything she knows."

I should much prefer to believe that the correspondences were due to chance than that the crystal-message was a cunning concoction of Mrs. Thompson's.

Whatever the source of the crystal-message, and whatever its evidential worth, it has an interesting bearing on the first



sitting which I had with Mrs. Thompson, for I cannot doubt that a great proportion of the true statements made about me and my affairs and belongings at my first sitting were but amplifications of, or deductions from, or happy guesses based on this crystal-message.

(2) AMPLIFICATION OF, AND DEDUCTIONS FROM, KNOWLEDGE ALREADY IN THE POSSESSION OF THE MEDIUM OR OF THE TRANCE-PERSONALITY.

If my interpretation of the oracular crystal-message is right, the somebody or something responsible for it certainly knew five things: (1) My surname; (2) my initials; (3) that I lived in Sloane Street; (4) that there was some connection between me and Dr. de Noé Walker; and (5) certain facts about Dr. Walker.

The date of the crystal-message was November 8th, 1898.

Nearly a year later, on October 28th, 1899, I met Mrs. Thompson for the first time, going, with Mr. Feilding, to her house under an assumed name. I am not satisfied, for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter, that the means taken to conceal my identity were effective; but whether they were or not, it does not affect my argument that the greater part of what Nelly said about me at my first sitting can be regarded as a mere expansion of the facts given in the crystal-message, or of facts which, though not actually expressed in the crystal-message, may without impropriety be treated as latent in the mind of the author of the crystal-message.

The séance of October 28th, 1899, opened in this way:

*Nelly*: "Some one belonging to you has got neuralgia; not yourself. I see white 'buses going in front of you all the time. I get the influence of a lady with neuralgia. I think there is a George in your personality. . . . Is your name Tod Sloane? . . . You have a wife, but I can't see any children."

Nelly then suddenly addressed me as "Mr. Smith," which, as I have said, was at that time my name; and when neither

Feilding nor myself gave any indication that the name right, the medium wrote on a piece of paper the letters [MS," i.e. the name Smith backwards. I assume that at point—it does not matter by what means—the trance nality had come to connect me with the Mr. Smith of rystal-vision.

will take these opening sentences of the trance-utterance im.

Some one belonging to you has got neuralgia: not self."

I get the influence of a lady with neuralgia."

The only point of contact between Dr. de Noé Walker and myself was the fact that my wife was consulting him account of neuralgia.

The author of the crystal-message was aware of there being connection between the doctor and myself; and though the connection was is not explained, it would seem on face of it likely that any one who discovered that there a connection at all would have discovered that the connection through my wife, and that she was being treated by Dr. er, and if so much was known, it is but a very little farther to assume that the particular complaint for which was being treated might also have been learnt.

[ see white 'buses going in front of you all the "

Is your name Tod Sloan?"

: a sitting held on November 10th, 1898, Nelly had ined to Mr. Myers that Mr. J. G. Smith of Sloane t would know about the muddled crystal-message. The e 'buses are an association of ideas with Sloane Street, ous enough to any Londoner; though it will be noted that, gh clearly latent in the trance-consciousness, the words ane Street" were not actually mentioned. Obvious too e association between Sloane Street (unexpressed) and Sloan; though what are we to think of a little spirit familiarity with turf celebrities of the hour? Nelly, ncy, afterwards felt that the allusion to Tod Sloan was r too incongruous, and needed some apology; for two or : months later she said to me: "Do you know any one ed Sloan? You're the man I called Sloan. I expect

that was mother's subliminal called you that." (Cf. "Benson & Bensons Limited," p. 224).

"I think there is a George in your personality."

My initials J. G. and my then surname had been given, though in a disjointed fashion, in the crystal-message, and also had been clearly given by Nelly on November 10th, 1898. The initial G. was correctly interpreted, much as in another case where the initials E. H., which had been within the medium's range of vision, were rightly read as Edward Horace by Mrs. Cartwright (see p. 178).

"You have a wife, but I can't see any children."

My comment on the reference to the lady with neuralgia applies equally to this sentence. The author of the crystal-message must, in my view, have been aware of the existence of my wife; but need not have known that I had any children. As a matter of fact I have one child; to whom Nelly, since Mrs. Thompson made her acquaintance, has often referred.

Then came the first reference to "Dorothy," on which I comment elsewhere (see pp. 214-220). This allusion cannot be traced to anything contained in the crystal-message. Nelly subsequently attributed it to the momentary intrusion of another spirit; and in any case I am obliged to consider that she turned at this point to some fresh source of information.

I then gave to the medium an old coin that had been in the possession of my father for some years, and Nelly said it had been worn by a man of whom she proceeded to give a personal description, and about whom she made in all six statements; four of which were correct, while two were possibly so.<sup>1</sup> Still, these details were neither numerous nor distinctive enough to permit me to say that their correspondence with facts was beyond chance. Then followed a prediction about my wife's health, as if Nelly were harking back to the nucleus of knowledge on which the crystal-message was based. Not that the prediction came true; but Nelly, having at her disposal

<sup>1</sup> One of these four statements was to this effect: "He has a dead Annie belonging to him." For over three years I had regarded this as incorrect; and it was only in September, 1903, that I learnt from a very old friend of my father's, who had known him from childhood, that my father had had a sister Annie, who died more than 50 years ago (see pp. 152-3).

the fact of my wife's ill-health, could not resist the temptation of manufacturing a prophecy out of it. (See pp. 246-250.)

A few more statements were addressed to me by Nelly, but not one of them was right, and none were traceable to the same source (whatever that may have been) as the crystal-message. With the exception, then, of the mention of Dorothy, and of the things given in connection with the coin, which latter, though not without interest, must on the whole be dismissed as not sufficiently definite, it will be seen that the successful hits were such as might without any straining of probabilities have been made by an intelligent being already possessed of the information displayed or presupposed in the crystal-message. In other words, it is not necessary, as far as an important proportion of the veridical communications is concerned, to assume that at the séance of October 28th, 1899, any new source of knowledge was tapped; a sufficient explanation is that knowledge held in reserve or latent was now brought forward, and that inferences were drawn from knowledge already manifested.

As an instance of what I should call a happy guess rather than a logical deduction, I quote the following:

At one sitting Mr. Feilding and a lady were present together. They did not arrive together, but it would have been obvious to an observant person from their manner of greeting that they were friends, and probably intimate friends. Mr. Feilding is a Roman Catholic, and this fact, if not known to Mrs. Thompson, might easily have been known to her. Nelly almost at once observed: "That lady and Mr. Feilding belong to one another." And later on: "And that lady smells of incense, too." The lady was a Roman Catholic, and it might be imagined that the medium either by means of her normal or a hyperæsthetic sense of smell detected an odour of incense which might have been clinging to the lady's clothes. This is, of course, a possible explanation, in spite of the fact that the lady had not been inside a church for ten days at least; but comparison of this with a similar case makes it more probable that the allusion to incense was merely a symbolical way of saying that the lady was a Roman Catholic, for the same phrase was used by Nelly on another occasion when there could have

been no question of the medium's senses being brought into play.

The occasion was Dr. Max Dessoir's sitting on April 19th, 1900. Speaking of a lady who she said was associated with a locket handed to the medium by Dr. Dessoir, Nelly remarked: "The lady used to be at school in a foreign country. Of course that's silly. There's a little chapel inside the school. A smell of incense." The statements of fact are wrong; the lady was not at school in a foreign country, but in England, and there was no chapel inside the school, and there was no significance in the reference to incense.<sup>1</sup> It seems clear to me that all three statements were deductions from the obvious fact that the sitter was a foreigner. The *data* were: this man, the sitter, is a foreigner, and he presents a locket. The train of inferential reasoning would have been somewhat as follows: The object being a locket, the dead or living owner must be a woman; as it is presented by a foreigner, it is pretty certain that the woman was also a foreigner; and if a foreigner, the chances are in favour of her being a Roman Catholic, and that she was educated abroad, and very possibly at a convent-school, and attached to the convent-school was probably a chapel; and in the chapel incense would have been used. Nelly recognises that the inference that the lady was educated abroad is so obvious as to be silly; but she either does not recognise or does not admit that the reference to incense is, if not quite so obvious, at least so obvious on reflection as to be "silly" too.

A student of the phenomena of Mrs. Thompson or of Mrs. Piper would do well to exercise a little time and ingenuity in going carefully through the records of a few sittings, with a view to tracing how many of the statements contained in them, no matter whether true or false, can be referred to one or more parent stems. The point which I am making is not, of course,

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written Mrs. Thompson, in the course of a conversation with me, made use of an expression very similar to Nelly's. Speaking either of a person or a place (I cannot remember which) she said she felt there was a smell of incense about him (or it), and *afterwards* explained that by that she meant the person (or place) was Roman Catholic. It will be noticed that she used the *symbolical* expression first, as if it came the more naturally to her.

original, and has often been made before; but it has not been enough insisted on, and I fear a careless reader is inclined to scan the record of a sitting and gather an impression from the general effect produced on him by seeing a number of statements marked as correct or incorrect: counting up the "W.'s" and the "R.'s," and by a simple sum in addition arriving at what he imagines to be the evidential value of a sitting. The manner in which we are bound for the sake of convenience and preciseness to affix to each separate statement an affirmative or negative comment no doubt tends to encourage such a system of reckoning; but if any one really wishes to assess at their proper worth the strings of details forming the trance-utterances, he must not consider each detail by itself, but with an eye to their sequence and interdependence.

The chief difficulty is to decide how far inference can be carried. Let us suppose that a middle-aged person attends a particular sitting, and that the medium adjudges his age rightly to be about 45. An easy inference will be that the sitter's mother must be an elderly and quite probably an old lady; likewise his father. That is inference the first. Inference the second, let us suppose, might be (a) that the sitter's mother has or had grey or white hair, or wore a wig; (b) that the sitter's father is or was bald or had white hair. Of course, neither of these inferences might prove to be true, for both parents might have died young, or they might have or have had exceptionally luxuriant and healthy hair; but in a great proportion of cases they would be correct.

These, of course, are very simple examples; but with some ingenuity it ought not to be difficult to plan far more intricate and less obvious deductions.

Let us suppose, for instance, that our middle-aged sitter of 45 attends a sitting in England in the year 1900, and is plainly an Englishman. He was born then in 1855, when his father was, say, 30 years of age. In 1851 the father would have been 26. The medium hazards a guess: "I seem to see your father in a huge building of glass. There are crowds of people. And now I see him looking at lots of things, so interested in them; and he's talking to a lady in a poke-bonnet who's leaning on his arm. And—Oh! yes, it's just like Hyde Park," etc., etc.

The middle-aged sitter, who doesn't seize the allusion to the Great Exhibition of 1851, is not at all impressed until on reading over the notes of the sitting to an elderly aunt he is reminded by her of the great interest which "your dear father took in the Great Exhibition. I remember so well his talking to me about it. I was quite young in those days. And when he and your mother were engaged he used to take her there every Saturday afternoon." And aunt and nephew are both mightily impressed, though neither will admit it, because one thinks such trafficking with mediums not conformable with strict piety, and the other because, as a man of the world, he is unwilling to avow any belief in such things.

Now, is my suppositious communication far-fetched? Cannot parallels to it be found *passim* in the records of trance-utterances? Not, indeed, that I wish for one moment to suggest, because one may in certain instances be able to discover a train of reasoning that could have furnished a medium with a portion of his communications, that therefore the process was conscious or even that any such process was brought into play at all. All I wish to urge is that any statements made by a medium in trance which can be accounted for in this normal way, even if they do not entirely lose their weight, must at least cease to rank as evidence for supernormal faculty.

I am not losing sight of the cumulative force of a large number of details in themselves non-distinctive; but even when this factor enters into the problem, mere accumulation alone is not enough to exclude chance, as much will depend on the character of the details. If all the details, however numerous, can be traced back to one basic fact within the ken of the medium's normal or trance-consciousness, or perhaps to two or three such facts, their cumulative force may not be entirely destroyed, but it is at least considerably diminished.

There is another type of statement which may be explained as an inference from antecedent knowledge, though at first sight only attributable to chance or supernormal power, which I will illustrate from my own sittings. The following statements were made by Nelly about a lady whom she subsequently identified as my mother.

(a) "She used to be fond of doing white embroidery: cut little holes, and then sew them round. That makes like

Madeira work. They use it for making babies' pinafores, dresses, and embroidery."

(b) "She had a funny little thing about five inches long like a needle-case, only like a carved ivory umbrella. You screwed the handle out, and you could put needles inside."

(c) "She has got a real Indian shawl in the possession of her daughter still. Is Paisley Indian? It's a bright-coloured shawl."

As regards (a), my mother, who was very clever with her needle, did Madeira work, and did it well; but, so far as my information goes, she was not particularly fond of it.

With regard to (b), my mother possessed a wooden needle-case with a bone (not ivory) handle shaped like an umbrella. It was about 5 inches long, and the handle unscrewed.

With regard to (c), there is in the possession of one of my sisters a white *Chinese* shawl that had belonged to my mother.

Before being in a position to comment on these three statements, I had to consult some members of my family. At the time of the sitting the only statement which I thought might have something in it was that about the needle-case. I seemed to have a hazy recollection of having seen such an article in my mother's workbox, though on reflection I was later inclined to accuse myself of having yielded to Nelly's suggestion.

What one may know subconsciously only Heaven knows; but consciously I did not know that my mother had possessed such a thing as a white shawl, and that one of my sisters had it still. There was not, however, a complete correspondence between Nelly's statement and the actual facts.

As to the Madeira work, I had never known that anything except an island, a wine, and a cake bore the name Madeira; nor did Nelly's description given in answer to my enquiry enlighten me much. Now that I know what Madeira work is, I think it possible that as a child I saw my mother engaged on it.

No doubt, especially at the first blush, these three coincidences taken in combination are impressive, and for the purpose of my argument it would perhaps have been wiser to have chosen a less extreme example of what I conceive may be the results of successful inference. Yet there is a certain advantage in selecting for discussion what may per-



haps be regarded as the utmost limit of ingenious deduction; for if it can be shown to be not outside the bounds of normal processes of thought, it follows that to less salient instances a similar treatment can be legitimately and confidently applied.

Apart from the fact that Nelly later on admitted that she had suspected that the lady about whom she had been speaking was my mother, it is clear from the general tone of the communications that throughout Nelly had in her mind a person whose career on earth dated back a considerable time, and one who belonged, roughly speaking, to the mid-Victorian epoch. Now the question is, to how many women whose youth or middle age belonged to this period could the three statements quoted above apply? It appears to me that they might be applied with a very fair chance of success to a very large number of my mother's contemporaries.

The shawl, the needle-case, and the Madeira work: they seem to me almost as redolent of the mid-Victorian lady as wax flowers under a glass-case standing on a woolly mat are of the lodging-house-keeper of blessed memory.<sup>1</sup> I was asking a friend and contemporary of my mother's the other day about Madeira work, and she said: "Oh! we all used to do Madeira work in those days." And then the shawl. Look in the pages of *Punch* or at the illustrations of an Anthony Trollope novel and the ladies all seem to be wearing shawls at all times of the day, and under all kinds of circumstances, and I know some ladies of the old school even now who seem as unhappy apart from their shawls as a man from his pipe. I understand that such shawls, in spite of their modest appearance, were often made of some relatively costly material: which would explain why, apart from associations, they might be preserved by a daughter of the wearer.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier period, cf. *Pride and Prejudice*, ch. viii. :—"All young ladies accomplished! My dear Charles, what do mean?"

"Yes, all of them, I think. They all paint tables, cover skreens, and net purses. I scarcely know anyone who cannot do all this, . . ."

<sup>2</sup> After reading the above, Mrs. Sidgwick sent me the following comment :—"40 or 50 years ago Indian Cashmere shawls were much more common than now, and were often very valuable, being heavily embroidered. The patterns of these shawls were imitated in Paisley shawls. I should think that many daughters have their mothers' Indian shawls. I have one that was my mother's."

As for the ivory umbrella-shaped needle-case, I should class this under the same heading as the Madeira work and the shawl: namely, under the heading of typical possessions or occupations of the mid-Victorian lady.<sup>1</sup> There are fashions in needle-cases as there are in everything else. A particularly fascinating or artistic novelty will have a great and relatively prolonged vogue. Needle-cases, workboxes, smelling-bottles, scissor-cases, pin-cushions, writing-desks, ink-stands, pencil-holders, blotting-pads, cigar-cases, cigar-cutters, cigarette-holders, match-boxes, and the thousand-and-one knick-knacks which men and women possess—of each and all of these some ideal pattern may be laid up in heaven, but the earthly artificer is every year or so fashioning some novel image of the ideal needle-case, let us say; and an experienced manufacturer or retailer of fancy-goods ought, I should surmise, to be able to date within a year or two any particular specimen. But because a specialist might be capable of assigning to the objects of his trade the approximate date of their first appearance in the market, is it reasonable to endow a medium with equal technical knowledge? To answer with a bald affirmative would be ridiculous; but if the subconscious memory has been rightly defined as “half lumber-room and half King’s treasury,” stowed away in its lumber-room may well be many such trumpery details; and if the lumber-room be a woman’s, they may not lie in so inaccessible a corner as in a man’s. Most women, so it seems to me, display an extraordinary power of observing and recollecting details about material objects. Listen to a man and a woman describing their reminiscences of their childish or youthful days, and while the man will talk about what he has done or thought, the woman will speak of things which she has possessed or loved, and if she recalls an incident, as often as not she associates it with some material object: a brooch, a watch, a picture, or what not. It would be interesting to compare the trance-utterances of a male and female medium together; for, if the subliminal memory plays any such part as I am here suggesting, references to personal possessions ought to be more numerous in the utterances of the woman.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Verrall, likewise, writes:—“We had as children, about 1865, a similar needle-case.”

(3) MRS. THOMPSON'S "CONTROLS" AND THE DRAMATIC BUSINESS OF THE TRANCE.

So far as my experience goes, Nelly plays by far the most important rôle in Mrs. Thompson's trances. Of the other regular control, Mrs. Cartwright, I have seen but little. Mr. Myers had a high opinion of Mrs. Cartwright's powers, and was, I believe, glad when she took Nelly's place. The results of her rare interventions at the sittings which I attended were not so successful as to make me regret their rarity. She seemed to me a good deal more interested, when she did control directly, in uttering sesquipedalian words than in doing her best to communicate evidential facts.

Mrs. Cartwright is supposed to be the spirit of a lady who was (not Mrs. Thompson's school-mistress, but) the proprietress of the school where Mrs. Thompson was educated. As represented in the trance, she is the typical school-dame of caricature; and indeed the Cartwright impersonation has never impressed me favourably. It seems to me lacking in the spontaneity of the Nelly and the "Mr. D." controls; and to be not unlike the sort of stereotyped caricature that school-boys, and, I imagine, school-girls too, make of their pastors and masters. I have known cases where, when once a true mimic has shown the way, a whole number of boys or undergraduates will, though incapable themselves of original mimicry, reproduce a rather wooden but on the whole amusing and recognisable caricature of some unfortunate pedagogue.

Now the Cartwright impersonation struck me as having much in common with this kind of conventional caricature; and I felt as if the medium might be reproducing in her trance a cut and dried delineation of her old mistress with which she had been familiar at school. Any one who is acquainted with the sort of stock caricature which I mean will understand me when I say that one knew beforehand almost the exact words which would be put into the mouth of the caricatured personage under any given circumstances.

In the same way I felt about the Cartwright control that her mode of expressing herself on any given topic was inevitable.

Yet in spite of creating this effect of being a mechanical puppet, this trance-personality aroused in me such feelings as one would suppose could only result from intercourse with a human being. Foolish as such a confession may seem, I must in justice to the qualities of this control admit that she irritated me to so great an extent with her verbosity and pomposity that I was heartily thankful when she didn't put in an appearance, or when she disappeared after a short space of time. Her conversation was as distasteful to me as that of the most indubitably alive of living bores; and the dislike was, I grieve to say, mutual. There is, of course, a contradiction here: on the one hand she produced the impression of the most mechanical of secondary personalities, while, on the other, she produced the irritation which only a living individual ought to. I cannot explain the discongruity: I can but record it. Yet if Nelly is not a mere secondary personality, no more can Mrs. Cartwright be: for Nelly has no doubts about the reality of Mrs. Cartwright, and, so to speak, vouches for her, just as in Mrs. Piper's case G. P. vouches for Phinuit. The pair of them must stand or fall together. And after all one must recognise that it is a common enough experience in this world to come across persons unfortunately and undoubtedly real who strike one as mere puppets in their behaviour and in their mannerisms; and this wooden type is to be found as often as not among prim old-maidish ladies who think it unbecoming—indelicate, in fact—to let themselves go and be natural spontaneous human beings.

Whatever view one may take of Mrs. Cartwright as a personality, it is perfectly clear that she is working behind the scenes all the time. That she is no mere nonentity in the trance-drama, to be brought on the stage only to create a diversion, will be seen from the following quotations:

*Sitting of November 29th, 1899.*

In answer to an enquiry which I made about materialisations, Nelly said: "Whenever a spirit materialises it is quite a *spontaneous* thing." And then added, "Mrs. Cartwright dictated that bit, and also about Alice James."

One might have fancied that the explanatory comment on materialisations was attributed to Mrs. Cartwright because, in using language incongruous with the ordinary language of a child, there was a desire on the part of the trance-consciousness to correct a momentary slip: but no such motive could have prompted the assigning of the statement concerning "Alice James" to Mrs. Cartwright, and, as will appear, this was no solitary instance, but a regular characteristic of the trance-drama. Earlier in the sitting I had handed to the medium a letter written by Mrs. William James; and in connection with it Nelly had among other things said: "Alice James writes letters; I've got to tell that." She had meant evidently that Mrs. Cartwright had told her to tell that.

*Sitting of December 1st, 1899.*

About a lady connected with an object handed to the medium Nelly said: "She had one or two unsuccessful trips for her health. This is what Mrs. Cartwright says."

This is the only reference to Mrs. Cartwright throughout this sitting; and it occurs just when Nelly has made use of rather "grown-up" phraseology. "Unsuccessful trips for her health" is not at all in Nelly's style. If I might venture on a parody, Nelly's way of expressing the same idea would have been something of this kind:

"You know Margate, Mr. Piddington. Well, the lady associated with the hair used to go to Margate when she was ill; only it wasn't Margate, but a place like Margate."

Supposing the statement had been expressed both in Mrs. Cartwright's words, and also in the language which I imagine Nelly would have used, I believe that the difference in the mode of expression would not have been due to a difference in the source of the information, and not altogether—though perhaps partly—to the difference in the stages of intellectual development represented by Mrs. Cartwright and Nelly respectively, but chiefly to the Cartwright personality being able to receive general ideas, and to Nelly having to have general ideas translated to her by means of charade-pictures into concrete particular ideas. A close study of the trance-utterances has convinced me that some difference in the mental processes of these, the two chief controls, is constantly exhibited, and with

an undesigned consistency so subtle that it is impossible to attribute it to deliberate artifice. Although this is the only instance in this sitting where Mrs. Cartwright's participation is directly intimated, there is one other passage where Nelly represents herself as receiving information through another, though unspecified, intelligence.

Nelly had been making various attempts to pronounce the name of the sitter, Dr. van Eeden, but had not got very near it. Then suddenly she remarked: "Do you know van Eeden? Somebody said that: somebody slipped in and said that, I think."

Similarly, in Dr. van Eeden's next sitting, Nelly, in compliance with a request that she should try to tell the name of the favourite place of Dr. van Eeden's father-in-law, said:—"Am-felt—Hamfelt—Handfelt—," and then after going off on another tack renewed her attempts at the name:—

"I am trying to find the name. It's like Shovel. It's difficult. They have to say the word and tell Mrs. Cartwright and she tells me."

The "they" was intended no doubt to refer to the Dutch friends and relations of Dr. van Eeden from whom communications were purporting to come.

Twice in the sitting of January 23rd, 1900, the notes of which were taken by Mrs. Benson, Nelly quotes Mrs. Cartwright as her authority for two statements. The passage runs as follows, and is worth giving in full because it illustrates very clearly Nelly's emphatic and apparently motiveless (motiveless, I mean, *unless* it really indicates the conveyance of knowledge to the trance-personality by some involved and not direct method) attribution to Mrs. Cartwright of certain of her assertions:—

"Mother's brooch. This was her brooch, and belonged to more than one generation. A lady—two children died. Her own hair, and two dead children's hair made into a brooch. The lady seems to be the third generation. Grandmother—mother—grandchildren. Mrs. Cartwright said 'Mother's brooch.' Some one telling me to say it was her mother's."

All the points here mentioned were true, but why does Nelly quote Mrs. Cartwright, or an undesignated "some one," as her authority for only one of these several correct statements?

Nelly continues:—"The person who wrapped it up (*i.e.* the

brooch, which had been wrapped in a sealed envelope) was not well when they wrapped it up. Inanition. Delicate—not well at all—wants nourishment. Mrs. Cartwright used the word. I don't know.”

The word meant is no doubt “inanition,” which would be out of place in Nelly’s vocabulary. She uses it like a parrot, and though she translates it correctly, she appears to be uncertain whether her interpretation is right or not. The diagnosis was quite accurate.

*The sitting of February 6th, 1900*, furnishes several good instances of Nelly’s dependence on Mrs. Cartwright’s coaching.

Speaking of my mother she said:—“Without being religious she was very fond of her Bible.” (“Religious” in Nelly’s sense means what is called “goody-goody.”) “The Bible to her was a comfort. She derived a certain amount of pleasure from perusing it.”

This last stilted phrase made me prick up my ears, and I asked:—“Did Mrs. Cartwright say that?” and Nelly assented. But when I have rightly suspected from the peculiar turn of a phrase that Mrs. Cartwright is responsible for it, it has not always been the affectation of the phraseology that has led me to detect the authorship, but often the manner in which Nelly has the air of repeating words that she does not understand, or with which she is unfamiliar. She brings these phrases out just like a child who, having been entrusted with a message, delivers it slowly and painfully in the precise words in which it was given.

Then, again, later in the same sitting, Nelly, describing the character of a relative of mine, delivered herself of the following:—“He was a harum-scarum, seek-your-luck man; not in a bad sense; not a man who appreciated any form of civilisation.” The last phrase Nelly admitted in reply to my question was Mrs. Cartwright’s. Nelly’s translation (or what I believe to be her translation of something told her by Mrs. Cartwright), as in the case just referred to, came first, and the original on which it was based is given afterwards, as if Nelly is not quite sure of having conveyed the true meaning. In this instance the “original” is correct and the “translation” wrong; in the statement about my mother and her Bible Nelly’s translation is truer than Mrs. Cartwright’s original.

In the case where the symptoms of the lady who wrapped up the brooch are mentioned, Mrs. Cartwright's "inanition" and Nelly's rendering—"wants nourishment"—are about equally near the mark.

A little later, speaking again of the man who "did not appreciate any form of civilisation," Nelly said:—"When he went to school he didn't like the monotony of the ordinary scholastic routine." This pedantic expression I also rightly put down to Mrs. Cartwright's account.<sup>1</sup>

Just before this Nelly had been talking about a clergyman who was said to have played a considerable part in my mother's life. "He *was* a friend: he seemed to do her some service. Mrs. Cartwright says, 'Render her a considerable amount of assistance,' and she didn't forget it."

Note the mixture of Mrs. Cartwright "*tout pur*" and of Nelly's colloquial "and she didn't forget it." Had Mrs. Cartwright completed the sentence, it would have run like this: "He rendered her a considerable amount of assistance, of which she preserved a life-long and most grateful recollection."

During this sitting my mother was represented as communicating through Nelly, and once Nelly professes to repeat her actual words. The words thus repeated are the words of a grown-up person, and yet not such as Mrs. Cartwright would have used to express the same idea. My mother is supposed to be referring to the man who "did not appreciate any form of civilisation," and Nelly reports as follows:—"Oh! dear, the lady says 'he *was* an unorthodox person.'"

The interest of this expression to me is that I have myself heard this precise phrase in the sense of "unconventional" used of this precise person by a sister of my mother. Nelly does not father this phrase on to Mrs. Cartwright, as in other cases where she has employed a phrase not in keeping with her usual simple style, but appropriately on to another spirit and with, at least for me, most telling effect.

Mrs. Cartwright would never have said: "Oh! dear, he was

<sup>1</sup>The way in which these passages are strung together may create the impression that I was responsible for suggesting to the trance-personality this particular bit of by-play. I am, however, quite clear in my own mind that I did not suggest it, and that it was only its spontaneous and frequent recurrence which led me to notice it.



an unorthodox person." In her *Daily Telegraphese* the sentiment would have transpired somewhat in this form: "I regret to be compelled to observe that he was an individual who possessed but slight regard and respect for the accepted conventionalities of social existence." The following effort of a modern lady novelist might have been written by Mrs. Cartwright, and would certainly have met with her approbation:—"The burnt child is proverbially a dissenter from the form of religion established by Zoroaster."

But I think I have said enough to indicate what part Mrs. Cartwright played in the series of sittings now under consideration. I draw attention elsewhere (see p. 212) to a case where Nelly appears to have remained in ignorance for some time of a fact known to Mrs. Cartwright, and I have also described (see p. 173) a tiff between the two; and it only remains for me here to put on record two grammatical slips made by that otherwise immaculate stylist, Mrs. Cartwright; and both, I regret to say, occurred at the sitting which had been enlivened by the tiff, and at which Nelly, who was very sore, complained that Mrs. Cartwright had criticised her culture:—"Mrs. Cartwright says I'm illiterate."

Nelly's grammar, it is true, is not above reproach, but, in spite of her choice diction, no more is Mrs. Cartwright's. I had handed to the medium a cap, and Nelly failed to give more than one, though that a very essential, fact about its owner, so Mrs. Cartwright undertook to come to the rescue, and expressed her intention as follows:—"With regard to that cap, Sir, I'm not prepared with any information about it; but I will [*sic*] be able to fathom it out for you. It may be even now one or two months before I can give details about it, but I shall eventually do all that you desire."

Note the "I will be able." This is not the language of a purist. But a more palpable error occurred in the same sitting. I was the only person present, and Nelly had been giving facts about Archbishop Benson, although I had not handed to the medium any object associated with him. Mrs. Cartwright broke in in reproving tones:—

"I'm afraid that child (*i.e.* Nelly) has been strolling out of her usual path, and not attending to the usual round. I refer to the Archbishop, you know. It was not given when the

relative of the person, or any article belonging to the person as present. It is only us [*sic*] higher spirits who do not have to make use of material objects in order to obtain information. You must not allow her to talk of trivial subjects, but send her back to us. Things that you make use of as evidence seem rather debasing to us."

I have quoted more of the passage than was necessary to show the grammatical error involved in using "us spirits" in the nominative, as it is an admirable illustration of Mrs. Cartwright's high-falutin' and consequential style. If it should be argued that these occasional grammatical lapses are due to what Dr. Hodgson calls a defect in the machine, I would reply that though Nelly's speech is slangy and incorrect—in keeping with her character, for she is half Puck, half *amin*, though entirely lovable—not only is Mrs. Thompson's language vastly more refined and accurate than Nelly's, but the "Mr. D." control, who has occasionally spoken with great fluency and ease in my presence, talks as good English as one can wish to hear.

The occasional mistakes of Mrs. Cartwright are not at all difficult to reconcile with the theory that she is the spirit of a middle-class woman of imperfect education (it should be borne in mind that she was not a teacher, but the proprietress of a school), who piqued herself upon her superior command of language; but it is not quite so easy to explain them if she is a secondary personality; for if "Mr. D." can be made to speak correctly, why not Mrs. Cartwright also?

*Sitting of February 1st, 1900.*

There had been a break in the trance of long duration, over an hour and a half in fact. Shortly before the medium was re-entranced she said she thought Mrs. Cartwright might be coming to control. Later on Mrs. Cartwright did control; but she was preceded by the control whom I call here "Mr. D." This control spoke only a dozen words, and disappeared. Nelly then came on the scene for a moment to say that Mr. D. had made a mistake, and added that Mrs. Cartwright would explain better than herself what had happened. Mrs. Cartwright's explanation was that she could not explain Mr. D.'s sudden and confused intrusion; and then the matter

dropped. But the episode was an interesting one to witness, for the change of controls was effected very rapidly and with complete ease, only a moment's silence between the going away of one and the arrival of the next; the medium displayed no symptoms of physical discomfort, and the alterations of personality, occurring as they did within the space of a minute or two, brought out into strong relief the distinctive features of these the three principal controls. Mr. D.'s intrusion was most lifelike and natural, his behaviour and slight discomposure were just like those of a person who has entered a room by mistake and found a stranger in it.

But Mrs. Cartwright is not the only spirit whom Nelly represents as being, as it were, behind the scenes during the progress of the trance phenomena and assisting in the play. Throughout the whole series of sittings, even where it is not categorically stated, Nelly evidently means it to be inferred that she is often in direct communication with other spirits, as, for instance, the friends of the sitters. The directness of the intercourse seems to vary; at one instant she appears to be quoting their actual words, and at another to be drawing facts out of them without their knowledge or approval. Dr. van Eeden failed to appreciate this complex phase of the phenomena, and was led to give expression to an opinion which is I believe unfounded. He writes (see *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., p. 84):

"I feel sure that genuine direct information is far rarer than the medium believes, and in good faith would have us believe." [I take it that "the medium" here means "the medium in trance," *i.e.* the trance-personality.] "I hold that a certain amount of unconscious play-acting is *nearly always* going on."

And again (*ibid.*, p. 82), "I could follow the process and perceive when the genuine phenomena stopped and the unconscious play-acting began. In hardly perceptible gradations the medium takes upon herself the rôle of the spirit, completes the information, gives the required finish, and fills in the gaps by emendation and arrangement."

This is in my view a misreading of the situation. Play-acting of a sort there may be: though to apply such a term to genuine phenomena is not very illuminating.

Nelly does not try to pass herself off as another communicating spirit, nor to represent as coming directly from another spirit information which she has herself acquired telepathically or clairvoyantly, let us say, or at any rate in some way other than by direct and mutually conscious intercourse with another spirit. Indeed she sometimes is at pains to guard against any misconception of this kind arising, and after having jumbled up messages from a spirit with other facts learnt by herself she will carefully differentiate the one from the other, and at the same time intimate that the more authentic of the two are the facts derived directly from the spirit.

It is true that if Nelly's exact words are not caught, it might appear sometimes as if she were trying to pass herself off as another spirit; but there is, I am convinced, no intent to deceive here, the confusion is due to the compulsion she feels to get things "off her chest." I use this slang phrase advisedly, because I think it hits off the situation. She either comes to a sitting primed with facts which she feels she must divulge before she has time to forget them, or else a sentence reaches her couched in the first person singular, and she repeats it just as she receives it except for transposing it into the third person, or gives it in the first person with the prefix "he" or "she says." Her chief anxiety is to give statements of fact, and other considerations are only secondary. But to any one familiar with Nelly's style it is nearly always clear when she is purporting to be in direct communication with a spirit and when not; though very occasionally there are indications that Nelly is herself unaware of the source of her knowledge.

In support of what I here maintain I append some quotations, by no means all that might be cited, but selected specimens. These quotations will also serve to illustrate the different methods by which Nelly claims to obtain information.

*Sitting of December 4th, 1899.*

Dr. van Eeden asks for details about his father-in-law.

Nelly at once makes a statement, which perhaps had some significance. Thereupon Dr. van Eeden asks, "How do you know?" and Nelly replies, "He says 'My son is a doctor.'"

She then goes off on to another topic, but Dr. van Eeden brings her back to the subject of his father-in-law again, and more statements are given as coming from him, or rather it is to be so inferred from the style in which they are made. Then Nelly says, "He has somebody belonging to him ill now, not very ill, has to lie down and be careful."

Dr. van Eeden:—"How do you know?"

Nelly:—"I see a picture of a lady lying down; she ought to be in bed. She's not well at all."

Here it will be noticed that Nelly does not claim to have derived the (correct) fact about the invalid lady directly from Dr. van Eeden's father-in-law, but from a (clairvoyant) picture. Yet a few sentences later she names him as her authority for another (also correct) statement, and again goes on to complain that he does not pronounce a foreign name which she is trying to get sufficiently clearly for her to catch it.

*Sitting of December 4th, 1899. (Evening.)*

Nelly describes the symptoms of a friend of Dr. van Eeden's and adds, "This is a description. I can ask him."

"A description" in Nelly's lingo means that she is seeing a picture in contradistinction to receiving information direct from a spirit. She then gives further details about the same person, some true and some false, and Dr. van Eeden asks her if the spirit is himself speaking to her. "Yes," replies Nelly, "but yet I can't say he does. He speaks to some one who tells me."

In connection still with the same spirit more facts were being given, Nelly speaking slowly as if repeating the words of an informant. This led Mrs. Verrall, who was recording, to say, "He is speaking now, is he not?" Nelly assents, but nevertheless she was using the third person, not the first.

*Sitting of January 18th, 1900 (Mr. Wilson's First Sitting).*

The trance was twice broken. In the first part the chief subject of the communications, Miss Clegg, is not represented as being present; at the beginning of the second part she is said to have come to Nelly in the interval and told Nelly to ask for her ring to be given to the medium. In the third

she is supposed to be communicating not directly, but through the intermediary of Nelly.

*Sitting of January 23rd, 1900 (Mrs. Benson's Second Sitting).*

At no time throughout this sitting is any spirit represented as communicating either directly or through Nelly, but at the close of it Nelly remarks: "When I can find the young man he will tell me all about it. He's very interested, but not quite convinced, rather guarded. In his heart rather religious scruples about me talking."

Nelly here is careful to point out unasked that on this occasion the "young man" (*i.e.* a deceased son of Mrs. Benson's who had been mentioned at her first sitting) is not himself taking any part in the trance-communications; yet she apparently claims to have met him in the spirit-world, and expects to meet him again.

*Sitting of January 25th, 1900.*

At this, Mr. "Wilson's" second sitting, Miss Clegg was again the chief subject of the communications, but not until the end is she represented as being within close enough range of Nelly to allow of the direct transmission of messages. At one point Nelly says: "She isn't a lady who takes notice when I tell her I'm talking;" and then somewhat later she makes a statement which is in superficial contradiction at least with the last: "I couldn't find the lady anywhere. I could only find a brother of this gentleman (*i.e.* Mr. Wilson) who died, etc."

And then she turns to the sitter and says: "Will you come and talk secrets? Perhaps the lady will come in a minute." Towards the end the lady seems to get into closer relation with Nelly, for after saying, "Somehow or another I think that lady sent a message," Nelly proceeds to deliver four messages for Mr. Wilson, and although it is not definitely stated that Miss Clegg's words are being repeated textually, yet the messages are worded in a way which not only suggest, but I have no doubt were intended to suggest, that they emanated consciously from the spirit.

*Sitting of February 1st, 1900.*

I was the only person present at this sitting. The medium was entranced very quickly, and before I had time to hand any object to her, Nelly spontaneously started off on subjects connected with Mrs. Benson—spontaneously, that is, in the sense that I had not suggested the topic to her, though possibly it was suggested to her by Mrs. Thompson having shown me before trance began an entry in her diary recording a communication made to her by Nelly about Archbishop Benson. Possibly, however, this is an example of Nelly's anxiety to unburden herself of an accumulated store of facts before they have time to fade from her memory; for she remarks early in the sitting, "I have been working hard, finding out about all these people." Then, after a very brief digression, she reverts to Mrs. Benson's belongings:

"I've still got the ecclesiastical on my mind. There's an ecclesiastical standing by you (*i.e.* by J. G. P.). He has got a night-shirt on—a respectable night-shirt—loose, blue sleeves: no, balloon sleeves—ribbon tied round—full all round. Broad face."

"Is he really there?" I ask, "or do you see a picture of him?"

"He's showing himself so that I can describe him. He's rather unapproachable. I can't ask him anything." . . . "He's not a talking gentleman. He's asking for you." (This second association of Archbishop Benson with myself is quite meaningless, and I think it possible that it is to be explained by a momentary forgetfulness on Nelly's part that I and not Mrs. Benson was the sitter. Cf. p. 213.)

Then follows another description of the spirit's dress; and after this he is said to be asking for some information about some one named Christopher; but in the middle of the references to Christopher Nelly interjects this odd remark; "He's almost like a queen. He's talking to the Queen like a great man." I call it odd, because almost in the same breath Nelly describes a past event in the life of the spirit and what he is at the moment engaged upon in the spirit-world, both equally in the present tense. It is a fine chronological jumble, but at the same time an instructive one, for it bears witness to the com-

plexity of the processes employed by the control and tells in favour of the spontaneity of the phenomena.

The two processes which I believe were in operation—perhaps in simultaneous, and anyhow in rapidly successive operation—were converse, direct or telepathic, or both, between the trance-personality and a spirit, and clairvoyant perception of facts about this spirit. I do not mean that I hold that to be the real explanation of the phenomena, but I do hold that the thing presents itself to the trance-personality somewhat as I describe, and that whether spirits be involved in the matter or no, knowledge reaches the consciousness of the entranced medium in the manner stated or adumbrated in the trance-utterances, and that there is nothing to show that there is any play-acting on the part of the trance-personality, and, on the contrary, much—especially in the artless consistency of the allusions to the *modus operandi*—to disprove it.

At the conclusion of the references to "Christopher," Nelly, alluding to the spirit from whom the Christopher messages purported to come, said: "He doesn't like me to talk. He has got religion in his heart and won't talk to me. He says he's tolerant to all men. . . ." (Here came an interjected remark about an object connected in no way with Mrs. Benson.) "He nearly said he had many cranks to deal with in his lifetime. I don't like him to be so consequential."

After this Nelly went off to entirely different topics; and subsequently Mrs. Cartwright expressed her disapproval of Nelly having attempted to talk of matters concerning Mrs. Benson when she was not present; as if she wished to indicate that Nelly had been exceeding her powers in trying to get within range of spirits belonging to Mrs. Benson's surroundings, when the conditions were not favourable. In any event it is obvious that Nelly was in a confused state of mind as to whether she was holding converse or not with the spirit about whom she was speaking. First she says he is showing himself in order that she can describe his personal appearance, then that he is rather unapproachable, and that she can't ask him anything, next that he is asking a question and sending a message, and that he doesn't like to talk, and, notwithstanding, finally reports observations which he apparently addresses to her.



It is best to record these puzzling and complicated statements without seeking to explain or reconcile the contradictions. I would offer only one reflection, namely that, whatever difficulties these complexities may raise on the assumption that the phenomena are either what they are represented to be, or are at any rate supernormal, as great difficulties arise on the assumption that the phenomena are fraudulent; for, though an impostor might introduce complexities through a momentary failure to carry through with perfect consistency either an elaborate or a simple scheme of mystification, neither from calculated artifice nor from want of skill would so erratic a portrayal of the methods of spirit communication be likely to result as we are offered in the foregoing instance.

*Sitting of February 6th, 1900.*

At the end of this sitting another method by which Nelly obtains information is disclosed. I alone was present, but, as at the previous séance, Nelly referred to Mrs. Benson's affairs among others.

Just before the trance concluded she said: "Canon, then Bishop Bowlby, he came and talked through mother. You know that old gentleman, Mr. Benson, he was an extreme friend of his. He told mother. He has been talking to mother." (For comments on other aspects of this episode, see p. 174.) Here the source of Nelly's information seems to be the medium herself, rather than Bishop Bowlby, for Mrs. Thompson, when she awoke, repeated what Nelly had said, with the exception of one assertion, namely, that the prelate "was very pompous," a fact which she would hardly be expected to have learnt from the man himself.

As this again sounds intolerably "anthropomorphic," I once more guard myself against a charge of accepting the phenomena at their face value, and emphasise the fact that my aim here is to render a roughly systematised account of the trance-drama as depicted in the trance-utterances.

*Sitting of April 19th, 1900.*

Dr. Dessoir was the sitter on this occasion, but interspersed among communications addressed to him were frequent references to my own affairs. My mother, too, was represented as

taking an active part on the other side in the effort to communicate. She suggests to Nelly that she should ask Dr. Dessoir for a certain object, and Nelly adds: "I don't understand, but somehow the old lady belonging to you is interested in finding out things for this gentleman."

And then again later she is said to have been talking to "Mr. D.," "but she didn't think him such an angel as we do."

Yet later on, when the medium was holding an object that had belonged to my mother, Nelly complains that she seems "rather indistinct," adding, however, as if in explanation, "she couldn't talk very distinctly before she died." This, I believe, was not the case; but it may have been a conjecture of Nelly's to account for the inaudibility of the spirit's conversation, for she creates the impression of reporting scraps of information which are being told her by the spirit, and which she has great difficulty in catching. Here, as elsewhere, it is clear that when spirits are represented as "present," or within ear-shot, or within visible range of Nelly, their proximity fluctuates spasmodically and capriciously; they flit into focus and out again like figures in a cinematograph.

*Sitting of May 1st, 1900.*

This was Mrs. Benson's third sitting, and though, as described above, Archbishop Benson had formerly been supposed to have been within near enough range for Nelly to describe his appearance, and to repeat messages sent by him, on this occasion it is expressly and spontaneously denied by Nelly that he is present.

"The person belonging to it isn't here a bit. I see a bright colour, though confused."

At the end of the sitting a dramatic scene occurred (see p. 212), in which Nelly displays great agitation in consequence of discovering—what Mrs. Cartwright already knew—the identity of "the clergyman who wears the night-shirt over his clothes."

Following on the long delayed discovery came another passage of considerable dramatic vividness:—

Nelly:—"What is this? He wants to say—Mrs. Cartwright's saying it out loud. She can't say it out loud. Write it"

(these two last words seemed to be addressed by way of advice by Nelly to Mrs. Cartwright.) (The medium here took a pencil and paper and wrote, apparently under the stress of much agitation, as follows:—

“He desires me to convey to you his intention to tell you of his private life apart from his public one. If possible alone, May 30th.”)

Nelly:—“He doesn’t want you (*i.e.* Mr. Myers) to hear, or any one: he is very certain. Mrs. Cartwright fetched him out. He doesn’t want any one to be there. Mrs. Cartwright has made him promise that. Very important. May 30th. The Grey Lady wants to take me home.”

Thus it will be seen that throughout this sitting the spirit about whom facts are being given never comes within Nelly’s range at all.

She sees him only as a bright colour in the distance. Mrs. Cartwright, however, gets into closer relations; she “fetched him out,” and is the bearer of a message from him, which she conveys not by speech, but by writing. Nelly repeats verbally the substance of the message, and then announces that “the Grey Lady” (a spirit who plays a subordinate part in the trance-drama, see p. 147) has come “to take her home.”

#### *Sitting of May 30th, 1900.*

It might have been expected on any hypothesis of the phenomena after this very definite and impressively made appointment that on May 30th the Archbishop would have been represented, at the least, as in direct and easy communication with Nelly, and had he controlled directly no surprise could have been felt. Yet as a matter of fact neither of these two things took place. Mrs. Benson sat with Mrs. Thompson alone, acting both as sitter and recorder, in order to satisfy the desire for privacy expressed at the last séance. There were good things in the sitting, but it was neither better nor worse, or at any rate not markedly so, than the other sittings attended by Mrs. Benson. Nothing of a specially intimate character was mentioned, and the best thing given was obtained not from the spirit concerned, but, so it seems, by means of a clairvoyant impression received by Nelly from Mrs. Benson’s daughter.

Apart from this particular instance, throughout the sitting there is a disorderly amalgam of communications, based at one moment on information supplied from the *soi-disant* Archbishop, and at the next on telepathic or clairvoyant impressions.

The séance opened in this way:

Nelly:—"This was the day when that gentleman said he wanted to come and talk. . . . Now I've got to ask that gentleman to tell you things. There is an Alice the old gentleman is very fond of." [Wrong.] He wants to know if you are lonely, if you are all lonely. What's that weakly lady with you? She is getting stronger; it's like nerves." [This allusion has significance, but had been made before.] "Was General Buller when you saw him?" [Mrs. Benson knows General Sir R. Buller.]

(Here Mrs. Benson handed a ring containing hair to the medium.)

Nelly:—"Two generations—two gentlemen. [Wrong.] . . .

"The old gentleman has met his dead brother. [The brother was dead.]

"He had a carriage accident in a country place." [Wrong.]

Then, after some other details, "The old gentleman says he isn't as interested as you are. He's very happy, perfectly happy without communications, and he doesn't think you need so much of his evidence. . . .

"I see the old books of his in the study. No earthly use having them; no use your keeping and worrying with them." [Mrs. Benson notes:—"Our house is full of books we have kept. We scarcely know what to do with them, and yet don't like to part with them."]

And so in this fashion the communications continue for some time, with an occasional message from "the old gentleman," but nowhere is any personal note struck, such as might well have been looked for under the circumstances. Then the séance concludes thus:—

"He (*i.e.* the Archbishop) blames me—the things he wants to say. He says one of the boys is going to publish a new book in the autumn. It will bring him more success than anything he has published before, but if he can't get it published in the autumn, he must wait till May; *not* winter. The old gentleman is very spiritual: really in a higher world than I

am. Just as difficult for him to tell me as it is for me to tell you. He is quite a stranger to me. What do you think he is a clergyman for? He is not come of a clergyman's family."

Regarded solely from the point of view of drama, the communications at this sitting constitute the flattest anticlimax. The spirit who announced with so much precision and *empressment* his intention of communicating seems to have grown lukewarm in the matter, and Nelly on her part appears to make no special effort to carry out the intention expressed at the former sitting, and to prefer picking up scraps of information by some other method than by holding converse with a remote spirit.

*Sitting of June 5th, 1900.*

A promise had been given by Nelly that a friend of Dr. van Eeden's, who had committed suicide, should control directly at this sitting.

Mr. Myers and Mr. F. N. Hales were present with Dr. van Eeden at the beginning, and when they left the room Nelly said to Dr. van Eeden:—"I want you by myself. I do not like them to know all these things. . . . It is not that he (*i.e.* the suicide) did not want to come himself, but the strange gentleman upset him." She then proceeded to give facts about the suicide and messages from him, and in conclusion said:—"I do not want to put you off, but next Thursday I promise you that he will speak. I want you all by myself."

*Sitting of June 7th, 1900.*

I must refer the reader to *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., pp. 100-111, for the report of this sitting, as a summary could not furnish an intelligible account of the dramatic play and of the alternations in the controls. I imagine that Dr. van Eeden's charge of unconscious play-acting was based principally on what took place at this sitting. The action and the utterance proceeded too rapidly to allow Dr. van Eeden time to take down a verbatim record, but, judging from the record which he was able to make, I cannot understand why he supposes that there is a tendency in Mrs. Thompson's case to exaggerate the extent and duration of the direct control of a communicating spirit. So far as I can see, there is no attempt on the part of the Nelly

control to personate the suicide. The communications, consistently with what can be observed elsewhere in Mrs. Thompson's trance, fall under three heads: (a) impressions about the spirit, the source of which is not explained; (b) messages purporting to be given by the spirit to Nelly; (c) direct control by the spirit; and no one who has studied the characteristic form of Mrs. Thompson's trance-utterances could be in doubt as to when one control was supposed to have ceased and when the other was supposed to take up the thread.

*Sitting of July 16th, 1900.*

Mr. and Mrs. Percival's first sitting. Mr. Myers recording.

Mrs. Cartwright was the only direct control, though the Percivals' son was, so to speak, in close touch with the control, and sending messages and information through her. She had correctly stated that the boy had died from measles, and that he "had spots over him like measles"; "his face looked red"; and added the reflection:—"He thinks it was funny to describe a spirit with a red blotchy face."

Throughout the sitting many glimpses are afforded of what is supposed to be going on on the other side.

Mrs. Cartwright opened with the words:—"Mr. Piddington is just as dictatorial to me as I was in old days to the children"; which may have been intended as an explanation of the infrequency of her appearances at sittings where I was recorder.

A book that had belonged to W. Stainton Moses was handed to the medium, but nothing came of this except that the medium's hand wrote "William Stainton," and that subsequently Mrs. Cartwright said that she saw little chance of getting at Moses, who was in a different part of the spiritual world. She also denied all knowledge of the Emperor group.

Mr. Myers asked what had first interested Mrs. Cartwright in the subject of spirit communication, and she replied as follows:—"I abhorred the subject of Spiritualism when on earth. Yet I could not help thinking about it, and I made up my mind that the first thing I would do on the other side was to see whether there was any truth in it, and then, if possible, come back and tell people it was all nonsense."

Mrs. Cartwright's meaning is clear enough, but her manner of expressing it suggests that she must have had more than a drop of Irish blood in her veins.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Myers then congratulated her on the improvement in her own control, "which," he says, "is to-day more flowing and natural than ever before," and she admits that she can now control more easily.

Then Mr. Myers asked if more than two sittings a week were advisable. Mrs. Cartwright answers that she herself does not think that there would be any harm in increasing the number, but she must refer the question to Edmund Gurney and Mr. D., "who are giving orders now." (See p. 299.) She goes away to consult them, and on her return breaks into a conversation between Mr. Myers and the sitters, apologises for the interruption, and says:—"I can hear the confused murmur of voices. I am interrupting. I have consulted Mr. D. He thinks that besides two sittings there might be a trance each week at home, when objects brought might be considered."

Then, as if her return to the atmosphere of the séance-room reminded her of what had been going on before she went away, she remarks:—"The boy (*i.e.* E. H. Percival) is a jolly little chap. He can't understand why he is wanted to talk about himself. 'Mother and auntie,' he says, 'know much more than I do about myself.'"

Yet it is a noticeable fact—an example of the undesigned and subtle consistency of the trance phenomena—that when some months later E. H. Percival controlled directly, the medium exhibited symptoms corresponding to those that the boy himself had in his last illness; the breathing was laboured, curious noises were made in the lungs, there was constant restlessness accompanied by coughing, and the control spoke of his dislike of being poulticed. So long, therefore, as the boy was only represented as conversing with Nelly, he cannot understand why the symptoms of his last illness should be mentioned;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. C. S. Schiller's *Humanism*, p. 288:—"Even if a ghost returned to announce to us the complete extinction of the soul at death, we could not credit so Hibernian an assertion." Mr. Schiller wrote, I believe, in ignorance of Mrs. Cartwright's 'Hibernian assertion,' as did I in ignorance of his suppositious *post-mortem* Irish bull.

but as soon as he controls the medium, physical symptoms analogous to those from which he suffered before death are not only manifested in the medium's organism, but form the subject of the trance-utterance.

Mr. Myers then asked whether she can see any spirit higher than the governing group, mentioning —— as one of that group. "No," she replied, "while I am doing this work I am excluded from the power of even visualising spirits higher than these. Names are hard to recall in the trance. If you had not said '——' I should not have known the name of Nelly's 'Grey Lady.'"

The "Grey Lady" is Nelly's name for a well-known authoress who is supposed to take an active interest in the direction of Mrs. Thompson's trance-phenomena; she has already been referred to as waiting to take Nelly "home" at the end of a trance. (See p. 142.)

Earlier in the sitting Mr. Myers had asked who were going to control Mrs. Thompson later on. Mrs. Cartwright said:—"X. Y. will control. She tried yesterday; she could not do it gently; she threw the sensitive on the floor, but did not hurt her. She was selected by spirits before she died for this purpose; she was prepared even in the old days."

I do not give the name of the spirit here mentioned by Mrs. Cartwright, because, if this spirit did purport to control some other medium than Mrs. Thompson, such a development would be interesting in view of Mrs. Cartwright's assertions: the more so because the lady mentioned was not the kind of person likely to suggest itself to the rather conventional fancy of the ordinary entranced medium.

This is not the only occasion on which a tyro in the art of controlling has been said to have thrown the medium down as a consequence of clumsy and inexperienced exertions. Mrs. Thompson has several times told me that when alone at home she has been thrown, sometimes with considerable violence, on to the floor. She herself and Nelly also attributed this to the ineffectual attempts of a certain spirit to gain control of the medium. On one occasion, although I did not actually witness Mrs. Thompson fall to the ground, I saw her lying on the floor with the leg of a chair poised on her forehead,



where it had raised a biggish bump. I examined this bump very carefully; it was evidently freshly caused, of that there was no doubt, as the lump increased in size and in redness after I first examined it. Mrs. Thompson was deeply entranced, and though she showed signs of a good deal of physical discomfort, she did not appear to be aware of the bruise on her forehead. Nearly an hour passed before I parted from her, by which time the bruise had almost disappeared. Not even when she awoke from the trance did she seem to suffer pain from it, but rather from a general sense of *malaise*. When she awoke from the trance after the fall I was anxious to prevent her from going into trance again, but she seemed compelled to relapse, and quite contrary to her usual custom, which is to sit perfectly quietly in any sort of chair, she sank on to the floor, and for some time seemed as if about to be possessed by the same maladroit spirit as before; but gradually the agitated movements subsided and gave way to the placid control of Nelly. The odd part about it was that Nelly seemed in doubt as to who it was that had made the ineffectual attempt to control and caused the rather distressing symptoms. She was at first inclined to lay the blame on the spirit who had been supposed to have thrown Mrs. Thompson to the ground when she was alone at home; but afterwards she was inclined to withdraw this statement and to substitute the name of another spirit, who has occasionally controlled, though, as far as I am aware, without causing any bodily discomfort to the medium.

*Sitting of January 3rd, 1901.*

E. H. Percival had been speaking directly, and at intervals Nelly was telling facts about him. At the first sitting which Mr. and Mrs. Percival had attended a plain *red* cap had been given to the medium that had been E. H. Percival's school cap; but it was not presented at this sitting. Nelly said:—"He was very fond of cricketing, and he wore a red and black striped jacket; striped blazer. He says it was a blazer, not a jacket. (Then in a tone of mixed indignation and contempt) 'Jacket,' he says; 'It was a blazer.'" [Correct.]

It would be difficult to portray with a happier or a lighter

touch the importance which the schoolboy attaches to the use of recognised terms, especially in matters of clothing, and his bristling up when a mere girl misnames an object which has only one possible designation for him.

*Sitting of April 19th, 1900.*

This sitting supplies another instance of the parenthetical way in which Nelly intimates the *modus operandi* of the trance. Referring to a lady whom she connects with Dr. Max Dessoir, she says:—"Dead lady. I can see her. I don't know what's the matter with her. . . . It almost makes my heart stop. (Here the medium puts her hand over the heart as if in pain.) She is like here quite distinctly. She doesn't believe I am really talking to you. She very much objects to one talking to her."

Besides illustrating Nelly's method of acquiring information, this passage also contains two interesting points.

(1) Although the spirit is clearly represented as not at close range, the medium displays symptoms of experiencing a sympathetic physical pain akin to what the spirit herself is supposed to have suffered.

If such sensitiveness is exhibited when there is no pretence of direct obsession, it can hardly be surprising to find symptoms of bodily disease far more strongly reproduced when a spirit is supposed to be in actual possession of a medium's organism.

(2) Here as elsewhere (cf. pp. 137, 138, 139, 146), Nelly intimates that scepticism is not confined to this side of the veil, and that in her efforts to forward the cause of psychical research she has to incur the invidious charge of being a Paul Pry. If my memory serves me well, Phinuit likewise has complained of the odium into which his inquisitiveness into the affairs of strangers has brought him.

I did not have any regular sittings with Mrs. Thompson for the purpose of getting communications on my own account; but in the course of three sittings I handed to the medium objects which had belonged to my mother. Until Nelly had discovered the identity of the owner of these objects, I most carefully refrained, at least consciously, from giving any hint that I was any more interested in these objects than in others

belonging to other people which I was handing to the medium at the same sittings. The most noticeable point about the things, which were given in connection with my mother, was that the best things were given just at the moments when my mother was represented as being within very near range of Nelly.

On the first of the three occasions, my mother was not mentioned at all; only my father, of whom a slight, though, as far as it went, correct personal description was given, and some other details (see pp. 118, 152-3).

On the second occasion, it was not suggested that my mother was within speaking range of Nelly, and apparently such facts as were given were obtained by means of clairvoyant pictures. Still the most striking passage occurred immediately before Nelly attributed a statement to an unspecified "some one," whose words she heard and repeated. On the analogy of what took place on the two subsequent occasions, it would not be inconsistent to regard this "some one" as my mother. The passage ran as follows:—

"A Mary belonging to this lady. Mary or Marian—a daughter. And an Uncle John, who everybody has got. Don't lose Margaret's hair. I heard some one say: 'Move the hair belonging to Margaret.'"

The overheard sentence indirectly conveys a correct statement of fact, and conveys it in a way which can, I think, without a strain be regarded as Nelly's rendering of a sentence which might very naturally have been spoken by my mother under the circumstances.

I had handed to the medium a lock of my mother's hair, which was part of a larger quantity which had been in the possession and keeping of my mother's daughter and my sister Margaret for many years. My sister had given me a portion of the hair some year or two before this. Nowhere is it suggested or stated that the dead lady's name was Margaret, and though Nelly did not seem to understand what was meant by the words, "Move the hair belonging to Margaret," it is noticeable that Nelly did not, as might have been expected, draw the inference from these words that Margaret was the name of the dead lady.

The advice to remove or not to lose the hair was

quite appropriate, for the trance was coming to an end, and I was collecting the various objects and odds and ends that I had brought to the sitting, and the tiny lock of hair might very easily have been overlooked. I quoted the mention of the two names given in connection with my mother immediately before the reference to the hair, because they are both right, and, with the name Margaret, make three, albeit common, names given close together, which, on the supposition that my mother was really communicating, I should have expected to have heard mentioned. Marian (not Mary) was a step-daughter, always, however, spoken off as a daughter; and the Uncle John, "who," as Nelly, with the instinct of the psychical researcher, remarked, "everybody has got," is my mother's only brother and my only uncle, that is, my only uncle except for two uncles by marriage, of whom I have hardly seen anything at all.

At the next sitting at which mention was made of my mother, only twice do the words used by Nelly suggest that my mother was in direct converse with her; and on each occasion the facts given were good.

"There was an Annie and a John belonging to her, not Jack. She seemed to be deliberate over it, as if it were John."

At first sight it would seem as if this repetition of a John in connection with the same person was inept and meaningless. As a matter of fact, it is not so at all. Four members of my mother's immediate family bore the name of John; her father, husband, brother, and son. She would naturally neither speak nor think of her father by his Christian name. Her husband was never called by his first name, John, but by his second Christian name; her brother, the "Uncle John" mentioned above, was and is always called John, and never Jack; I, her son, am and always have been called Jack, and never John. Although therefore Nelly does not seem to understand why any care should be taken to distinguish carefully between John and Jack, there was, as a matter of fact, need for careful discrimination.

After the words: "She seemed to be deliberate over it, as if it were John," Nelly continued without a break: "The Annie was not like a daughter. She seems to be one that she used to help. She made her a shawl once. Not help in

monetary ways, but she helped her and knitted for her, and she bought Annie an old-fashioned pedestal work-table."

This statement, made in February, 1900, I was not able to verify until the end of September, 1903. I could not remember any friend of my mother's whose Christian name was Annie, and enquiries among my relations did not help to throw any light on the matter. In the summer of 1903 I received a letter from an old friend of my mother's, from whom I do not remember having received a letter before; though she may perhaps have written me a letter of congratulation in 1894; but in any case I had seen her only two or three times since my early childhood, and her existence was so little in my conscious thoughts that though at some time or other I must have learnt that her name was Annie, the mention of the name by Nelly never suggested this lady to my mind. When, however, I noticed the signature of the letter, I recalled the reference by Nelly to an Annie connected with my mother, and so I went to see this old friend of my mother's. She told me that my mother had "been exceedingly good and kind" to her, and helped her in many ways. She had once, and once only, knitted a shawl for her. She used to help her with making clothes for her little children; and especially in devising and cutting out patterns for their dresses. She never gave or bought her an old-fashioned pedestal work-table; but having come into possession of some furniture (whether by purchase or inheritance, I cannot say) on the death of a relation of my father's, and not needing it all herself, she gave Annie some of it. This furniture was probably very old-fashioned even then.

The correspondence is close, and interesting because, though out of my subconscious memory might have been got the name "Annie" as that of the friend of my mother, I think it very unlikely that at any time in my existence had I heard of the gift of a shawl, or of the help that my mother gave to "Annie."

I think that such coincidence as there is between Nelly's statements about this Annie and the real facts is the more striking because there were two Annies mentioned by Nelly in my sittings, one said to be connected with my father, and the other with my mother. Not only at the time of the

sitting was I, but for more than three years and a half after it I remained under the impression that the name was without significance in either connection. The day after I discovered about my mother's friend Annie, from an entirely different source, I learnt that my father had had a sister named Annie, who died more than fifty years ago.

I had never, to the best of my knowledge, heard her mentioned, nor did I know of her existence. My ignorance on this point may seem curious, but my father outlived all the immediate relations of his own generation by some twenty years, and but rarely referred to them. He had, for instance, an only brother, to whom he was deeply attached; yet I never heard him mention him, or even refer to his existence.

Nelly continues to give facts about my mother, but she does not purport to recite her actual words except once, and then, as I have already described, with telling effect. She is speaking about a living relation of my mother's when she exclaims:—"Oh! dear, the lady says 'he was an unorthodox person.'"

There is a note of amused despair at the unconventionality of the relation's character which strikes me as most lifelike. Nelly scored a double success, first in hitting off so neatly a prominent characteristic of the individual in question, and then in putting the phrase into the mouth of my mother. I am well aware not only how difficult it is to convey to strangers the force of little intimate touches of this kind, but also how easily one may be led into reading into turns of phrase a special appropriateness when really they are commonplace enough; yet neither of these considerations ought to deter me from admitting with frankness when some small personal point has produced on me a strong impression.

This sentence alone seems to have been directly inspired by my mother, for when a little later on Nelly, making the discovery that the lady about whom she had been speaking was my mother, I asked:—"Where is she?" I got the reply:—"She doesn't seem to be in England." "No," I said, "I mean in what sphere?" "It's no good me pretending I know. I can't see her; I only see pictures."

At only one other sitting were communications supposed to come from or about my mother. Though she was said to be

assisting Nelly in discovering facts about the sitter, twice only is the impression conveyed that she is conversing directly with her, and then only once were the messages of an evidential character. They were not so striking, or rather they did not strike me so much, as the others which I have just cited; yet they were the best things said in the sitting. I will not, however, quote them, because they would need a good deal of explanation, and the point which I wish to make is that the communications which either purported, or which were so worded as to lead me to infer that they purported, to come directly from the communicating spirit, were more evidential and impressed me as more authentic than those which were merely the outcome of Nelly's own researches.

*Sitting of December 20th, 1900.*

This was the first of the screen sittings (see p. 163) at which I was present, and the second that had been tried. The strange conditions not only annoyed Nelly, but also affected her powers adversely. Whether the medium would have gradually accustomed herself to them, or whether they would have permanently hampered the full exercise of her abnormal perceptive faculties, must remain an open question. I was told by various critics that in thus rendering the conditions more severe I was putting an undue strain on Mrs. Thompson's mediumship, which, remarkable as it might be, would by reason of the slightness of her trance prove unequal to the new test. Had a prolonged enquiry shown a lower percentage of success in screen sittings as compared with others where the sitters were not hidden from the medium's view, and if similar experiments with other mediums produced similarly inferior results, at any rate we should learn something about the conditions which influence the exercise of trance-mediumship, instead of as at present remaining without one glimmer of light to guide us in such investigations. And I take it that while we do not at present possess a sufficient mass of evidence to place beyond doubt the fact of exercise of supernormal faculty, yet there is enough presumptive evidence to justify us in varying the conditions (even though by doing so we diminish the stream of purely "evidential" facts) in the hope of lighting upon some law of the phenomena.

After the experience gained at the half-dozen screen sittings I am by no means sure that the concealment of the sitter would have necessarily resulted in the eclipse or partial eclipse of Mrs. Thompson's powers. None of these sittings, it is true, could be accounted successful, but they were not entire failures, and such falling off as there was from the general standard ought not probably to be attributed wholly to the new conditions but in part to other disturbing influences. And even where the deterioration was plainly due to the concealment of the sitter, I am disposed to think that the reason must be looked for more in the subjective effect produced on the medium than in the objective separation of the sitter from the medium.

In spite, however, and perhaps in consequence of the comparative non-success of this sitting, it furnishes several hints of the various modes of communication resorted to by Nelly, given as usual in asides:—

"All these are pictures only; not from the lady herself." . . .

"Some knitted bedroom slippers. There's such a lot of pictures of things."

*J. G. P.*:—"Can't you get at the people themselves?"

*Nelly*:—"Not yet; they can't understand how to get at things."

*J. G. P.*:—"Are they trying now?"

*Nelly*:—"Yes, for they've tried before this time."

. . . "Do you think Mrs. Benson writes poetry? I can only see that old gentleman. Why did you (*i.e.* *J. G. P.*) talk about Mrs. Benson?"

*J. G. P.*:—"I didn't."

*Nelly*:—"Well, I can hear *somebody* talking about Mrs. Benson."

(Mrs. Benson was as a matter of fact the sitter, though she had up to this point been hidden from the medium, but as she had inadvertently whispered a few words to me, and since, as a former sitter, she might have been recognised by her walk, or breathing, or by some other such clue, one is not bound to conclude that there was anything supernatural in Nelly's allusion.)

". . . I wish you'd tell Mrs. Benson to come and see me."

*J. G. P.*:—"Why?"

*Nelly*:—"I only want to tell her that something made them



very thirsty when coming in the train from Ober-Amergau. Somebody belonging to Mrs. Benson, who took care of them when they went there, told me that." . . . "I can only see Mrs. Benson now. To begin with the beginning. First comes the old lady belonging—You do mix it up, you know." (This remark was not apparently addressed to me, but *sotto voce* to spirits.) . . .

(On the removal of the screen.) "You can use the screen until I've found out six more people. You see, I scored off you. It's more harder work. I can never find spirits when I've got anything earthly to find. I can only see pictures. I don't mean that you are earthly, darling Mrs. Benson; but you understand." . . .

"I didn't find anything or anybody. I shall only talk nonsense if I go on."

This distinction between seeing pictures and direct converse with a spirit is again brought out in the sitting of January 3rd, 1901. Nelly, referring to the Percival control, says:—"He's gone away, and there's a picture only."

J. G. P.:—"Won't he come back?"

Nelly:—"He'll come back soon. He's talking so much to Mr. Moses. He's a kind of little Moses—a disciple of Moses."

From the record of the sitting of January 8th, 1901, I take the following illustrations of the trance-mechanism:—

"I can see King's Cross written up in front of my eyes; not my mother's eyes. You see the difference?"

(Referring to the Geoffrey Scott control) "He's trying to find out [certain information]. My mother's very disagreeable. I'm only looking after her while Geoffrey's gone away. . . . He can't remember what he said he'd write last night; but he can't remember it now. He has got to impress it on Mother's brain, and I'm using half Mother's brain."

The *locus classicus* on the fitful variations in the continuity of the trance and normal consciousness is to be found in the sitting of January 29th, 1901. It is worth quoting in full, because it shows that Nelly recognises and admits not only various sources of information, but also variation in the authenticity of her own utterances.

"Sometimes I can really be my mother. Sometimes I can really think with my mother's thoughts into other people's

hearts, and sometimes I am really myself, not a bit my mother, a spirit talking to spirits. When I'm really a spirit talking, everything in mother is quiet, like an empty house. When I'm a bit of my mother, it's like as if I was in an inhabited house, though I can't see the inhabitant. When I'm inside mother and she's not right away I seem to hear things said and thought, and don't know whether it's my mother or something else. 'I haven't the power to discriminate,' Mr. Sidgwick says that of it. He can hear me quite well now."

*J. G. P.* :—"Ask him about 'Trevelyan's transferred.'"

*Nelly* :—"No, I can't make him understand. I should only guess."

This avowal was unprovoked by any enquiry on my part, and its frankness may be compared with other instances where Nelly has been at some pains to prevent equal confidence being placed in all her statements indiscriminately.

#### (4) THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MRS. THOMPSON'S NORMAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TRANCE-CONSCIOUSNESS.

The most marked difference between Mrs. Thompson awake and Mrs. Thompson entranced lies perhaps in the modification of the speech. There is an alteration in the manner and also in the facial play, but both are less clearly defined, and liable to considerable variation, so much so that at times it would be very hard, if not impossible, to say whether the Nelly manner and expression of face or Mrs. Thompson's ordinary manner and expression preponderated. But between the diction of Mrs. Thompson and the diction of Nelly there is so great a divergence that it cannot ever be open to doubt as to which of the two is supposed to be speaking. Mrs. Cartwright quite rightly described Nelly as illiterate, and Nelly recognises and regrets her inability to express herself better: "I wish I could speak more learned like," she once said. Mrs. Thompson, on the other hand, is, I need hardly say, nothing of the kind. She expresses herself both in speech and writing, particularly in the latter, with intelligence and with rather more than ordinary

precision, and, if not with the grammatical accuracy of a purist, at least with no more frequent violations of the King's English than we may any of us be guilty of from time to time. Nelly's blunders are, on the contrary, committed wholesale, and they are not merely the careless slips of a person who knows better, but thorough-going downright barbarisms—the barbarisms of the nursery, not of the street, however. This feature of the Nelly personality seems to me equally puzzling on any hypothesis. At the same time it would be unprofitable to discuss all the extremely hypothetical points involved, and I content myself with directing attention to the existence of a problem.

Instead of reproducing in my notes Nelly's mispronunciations and other grammatical eccentricities, I as often as not substituted for them the proper form of spelling or construction, except where it seemed possible that some importance might attach to the misuse of a word or phrase. It will be understood that when a recorder has all his work cut out to keep pace with the trance-utterances, he does not wish to add to the difficulty of his task by having to represent peculiarities of speech by means of phonetic spelling. The written records give, therefore, a rather too favourable idea of the correctness of Nelly's speech. Still, I very often did have time to report Nelly not only textually, but phonetically too. I quote some of the worst specimens of her phraseology in order to make clear how the illiterate Nelly differs from the educated Mrs. Thompson.

"That makes like Madeira work."

"I telled you that before." (Yet the same afternoon the correct form, "I told you," had been used—that is, supposing that the recorder, Mrs. Verrall, who, however, usually noted Nelly's 'baby-language,' had not amended Nelly's grammar.)

"He writed with you about mesmerism."

"Cappychising" for "catechising," "muggling" for "muddling," and such like childish coinages are frequent.

"It's more harder work."

"Somebody in Mrs. Piper's house they said."

"She has got a very ill mother."

"X. writed it."

"Ask this lady what she writed in the train with this pencil."

"He said he writed it, and told the lady about it." ("Writed" but "told," not "telled." Yet the correct form "wrote" is also used by Nelly, and always by the Percival control.)

"She only thinked it."

"Tell Margaret to write to Mr. Myers and cheer him up like, cheer him up."

"She wasn't a sort of consumptive die; much quicker."

"I went, but it was a 'muddled went.'"

These last two instances ought not perhaps to be regarded as grammatical errors, but rather as a characteristic mode of speech, and one not altogether foreign to Mrs. Thompson herself. Such an expression, too, as the one quoted above: "Somebody in Mrs. Piper's house they said": is due probably to the broken style of utterance, and were one dealing with Thucydides instead of Nelly the halting construction would be dignified or white-washed with the name of *anacoluthon*. Yet many and less glaring errors in Nelly's speech cannot be got round in this way, and it is quite certain not only that it would be impossible for the normal Mrs. Thompson to use such forms as "more harder," "writed it," and so on, but that generally Nelly's speech falls very far below the level of Mrs. Thompson's. Mrs. Cartwright's speech neither falls below nor rises above the level of Mrs. Thompson's. Her parlance is *sui generis*, and cannot fortunately be compared with Mrs. Thompson's. It might be termed pedantic were it not that pedantry usually connotes an ostentatious display of accurate knowledge; the ostentation is there, but the accuracy is not, as I have elsewhere shown (see pp. 132-3), unless, indeed, Mrs. Cartwright's English, pure and undefiled at its source, has been contaminated in the process of passing through the speech centres of the less scholarly medium.

I once had a conversation of some twenty minutes' or half-hour's duration with the "Mr. D." control, and though I purposely recorded only a fragment of what was said on this occasion, I was much struck with the accuracy and refinement of the speech, and nothing said by this control on other occasions in my hearing has contradicted or diminished the impression which I then received.

There was not enough direct speech uttered by the Percival control to justify any detailed comparison being drawn between it and the speech of the other controls or that of the medium;

but so far as it went, it struck me as being quite in keeping with the character of the personality which this control was supposed to represent. My contemporaneous note made on its first manifestation ran thus:—"The part from 'Oh! I can't breath,' to 'my Oxford box' [*i.e.* the utterances of the Percival control] was not spoken in Nelly's voice, nor with her manner. The speech was much slower and more refined."

I refer elsewhere to the character of the Sidgwick control (see pp. 236-7), which was remarkably life-like. The direct utterance, however, contained one ungrammatical phrase which it would appear necessary to assign to the medium's own habits of speech: "Alice will know that it's me that's written it."

Generally, though not perhaps invariably, Nelly must be credited with knowing anything that is known to Mrs. Thompson; and the range of common knowledge includes not only domestic matters or matters in which Mrs. Thompson takes a special interest, but all such general knowledge as may reasonably be supposed to be part of the intellectual outfit of a person of average education.

Nelly refers to mundane affairs, past and present, with easy assurance, and has only once (see pp. 117-8) within my experience thought herself called upon to explain how a spirit who, one must not say, left this earth, but, one may say, who died at the age of a few months is as glibly *au courant* of the affairs of this mortal life as if she read her daily newspaper. She nicknames (behind his back) Dr. van Eeden "Brother Boer"; Dr. van Eeden's father-in-law is described as having worn "a hat like Tennyson," and knowledge of recent Dutch history is shown. My mother is said to have "had a lot of people belonging to her when alive who did a lot of talking, like Parliamentary; only they didn't act much; they helped to make the laws, but were not officials like Chamberlain, but like John Jones, M.P., only not Cabinet Ministers." A congress was said to have been attended by Dr. van Eeden, and the place where it was held is thus particularised:—"You know the 'North Pole,' *Pôle du Nord*, where people sing and dance. Turning out of the street in which was the 'North Pole' was the big hall where the Congress was held." She repeats scraps of Mr. Thompson's conversation, and also of that of Mrs. Thompson. In connection with an object handed to the medium she says:—"I

seem to have a feeling of Bruges—where the lace is—where Ostend is.” “How do you know it’s Ostend?” I ask. “Oh!” replies Nelly, “I see little wooden houses.”

In one instance Nelly’s memory fails where probably Mrs. Thompson’s would not have. She is trying to get hold of the name “Guernsey,” and defines it in this roundabout manner: “It’s very near, near England. Where does Mr. Marsden [assumed name] live when not at Cheltenham? Marsden Park? I can’t remember the name of the place; only the hotel where they all stayed,” and then gives the name of the hotel correctly. Mrs. Thompson had some time before this stayed at the hotel named, and visited, with Mr. Marsden, Marsden Park; but though Nelly cannot recall the name of Mr. Marsden’s place for the moment, it is clear that she implies that she once had known it. The reference to Guernsey occurred in connection with an incident which exemplifies another aspect of the relations between the waking and the trance consciousness.

At the sitting held on the afternoon of January 5th, 1900, Nelly remarked:—“Have you seen a shipwreck? Because I can see it. It is mixed up with Mr. Marsden. He is not in it, but he has something to do with it. Mr. Marsden is very ill with bronchitis: that’s why he hasn’t written to you [*i.e.* J. G. P.]. It had got letters on the shipwreck. It’s very near,” etc., and the passage ends as already quoted.

The early editions of the evening newspapers of January 5th, 1900, contained accounts of the shipwreck of the G.W.R. S.S. *Ibez* off the coast of Guernsey, and I myself had already seen the announcements on the posters. I do not remember if the steamer’s name was given; if not it would account for Nelly confining herself to saying that “it had got letters on the shipwreck.”

I, however, made no remark to Mrs. Thompson when the trance was over, and awaited developments. Our next meeting was on January 10th, and at the conclusion of the sitting held on that day Mrs. Thompson spontaneously told me that she had learnt from Nelly that she (Nelly) had spoken about the shipwreck, and she expressed her annoyance at Nelly’s stupidity, because she had read the news of the shipwreck on the newspaper posters on her way to my house on January 5th. It

would, in my view, be absurd to charge Mrs. Thompson with having knowingly introduced into the trance-utterances this reference to the Guernsey shipwreck; I entertain too high an opinion of her intelligence to be able to suppose that she, who has every reason to be well acquainted with the methods of our Society, entertains so low an opinion of our intelligence as to imagine that she could pass off as supernormally acquired this item of news which the very simplest enquiry would have shown to have been within the range of her normal consciousness. A nearly parallel case is cited below (see pp. 179-180), a case which I equally and for the same reasons find it impossible to regard as suspicious. The interest of these two cases lies rather in the fact that they suggest that Nelly is not always aware of the real source of her information, or as Nelly herself defines the position, "When I'm inside Mother and she's not right away I seem to hear things said and thought and don't know whether it's my mother or something else." Now it is noticeable that these two instances of the reproduction in trance of specific pieces of information possessed by the medium in her normal state both occurred at sittings which were very poor in results, and at which Mrs. Thompson was in a state of continual restlessness and was obviously ill at ease; a condition which appears to answer to what Nelly terms, "When I'm inside Mother and she's not right away."

At this same sitting on January 5th, 1900, the following incident happened:—There had been an interval of about 10 minutes during which I had gone into the next room. Soon after I came back into the séance-room Mrs. Thompson relapsed into trance, and I then found that I had mislaid my pencil. I exclaimed, "Where did I put my pencil?" to be met with Nelly's instant and correct rejoinder: "In the next room." I had mislaid the pencil in the interval between the trances, and not during the time that Nelly was controlling. Her answer may of course have been based upon a mere conjecture, or she may have derived her information telepathically from a part of my consciousness which may have remembered what I had done with the pencil: an explanation not quite so gratuitous as it may seem, for I have on several occasions been convinced that Nelly has during the course of a sitting read my unspoken thoughts, not obvious thoughts which might

ave been easily conjectured by any one present who was allowing the proceedings, but thoughts not suggested by what was being said or done at the time. Or, again, Nelly may have drawn on Mrs. Thompson's conscious or subconscious knowledge of the whereabouts of my pencil, or Mrs. Thompson may not have been in trance at all and made a silly slip. The last explanation is the only one that does not recommend itself to me.

Though this last episode would lead one to assume that Nelly keeps an eye on what is going on just before and after trance, an incident that occurred at the sitting on January 18th, 1900, shows that she is sometimes unobservant of matters which one might have supposed could not have escaped her.

Mr. "Wilson" and I had left the séance-room together during an interval in the trance in order to talk over what had been said. On our return we found the medium re-entranced and Nelly talking gaily and volubly to nobody. I class this incident under the relations of the trance and normal consciousnesses because it is evident that, up to the moment of passing into trance, Mrs. Thompson must have been aware of our absence from the room and of the consequent inutility of the trance-utterance beginning before our return.

At a few sittings the sitter did not enter the séance-room until trance had begun, and was both on and after entering hidden from the medium by means of a screen, and enjoined to keep strict silence. At one of this series a lady whom I will call Mrs. Scott was to be the sitter; and I had previously arranged with her, for reasons to be explained presently, that when she came to the S.P.R. Rooms at 19 Buckingham Street, where the sitting was to be held, she should walk into the Library with a heavy tread and slam the door after her, so that Mrs. Thompson, who would be in the next room, might hear her movements. Mrs. Scott carried out these suggestions, and also when she came into the séance-room after trance had begun she pursued the same tactics. The Library, it should be understood, was separated from the séance-room by a short passage or lobby. Mrs. Scott had had several sittings with Mrs. Thompson before this, as had also another lady, whom for the purposes of narrating this incident I will call Mrs. Taylor. I had noticed that Mrs. Scott was unusually tranquil and



noiseless in all her movements; whereas Mrs. Taylor's movements were marked by a certain energy and impetuosity. Accordingly it occurred to me to try an experiment by way of testing how far indications afforded to the waking Mrs. Thompson would be utilised by the entranced Mrs. Thompson. The object then of Mrs. Scott's assumed gait was to copy that of Mrs. Taylor. The result of these insidious manoeuvres was interesting.

After Mrs. Scott had made her noisy entry into the Library, and before she entered the séance-room, Nelly said:—

"I want to write to Mrs. Taylor. I want to tell her lots of secrets." But no sooner were these words out of Nelly's mouth than another control began to speak, whom I at once recognised as the control who purports to be the son of Mrs. Scott. Mrs. Scott then entered the séance-room. The Scott control had ceased speaking before she entered, and Nelly, after what may have been a passing allusion to a relation of Mrs. Benson's, returned to the subject of Mrs. Taylor's affairs, though without actually stating, and perhaps without even wishing to imply, that Mrs. Taylor herself was present. Meanwhile in the intervals of Nelly's silence the Scott control kept intervening, and Nelly gave messages about or for both Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Scott more or less alternatively. Mrs. Thompson then half awoke, and Mrs. Scott and I retired into the next room. When I returned, alone, to the séance-room I found the medium in the middle of writing the following sentence:—"I am my mother's boy. I am Geoffrey Hamilton [Christian names, as surname, fictitious] Scott. She has gone. I know my . . ."

When the Geoffrey Scott control had plainly shown that the identity of the sitter was discovered, the screen was removed, and consequently Mrs. Scott exposed to the medium's view. Thereupon the following occurred:—

*Nelly*:—"If Mrs. Scott were to come and talk to me properly."

(Mrs. Scott then spoke to Nelly.)

"You were really there all the time? What was it made me know it was Mrs. Scott? Geoffrey's locket told me. It's in a box, with the glass broken."

Nelly claimed to have known that Mrs. Scott was behind

the screen; but though I think she was gradually feeling her way towards this discovery, she did not definitely announce it. She does not, it is true, actually assert that she had stated who the sitter was; only that she knew that it was Mrs. Scott, which might be taken to mean that she had had an underlying suspicion that Mrs. Scott was present, and this I think there is some evidence to show that she did have, or perhaps I ought rather to say that she was hesitating between Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Taylor, inclining, though, if anything, more to the latter than the former. But, however this may be, it is rather strange that she should attribute her alleged knowledge to a locket that had been handed to the medium early in the sitting rather than to what one would have fancied would have been the more obvious source, namely, the appearance of the Scott control, and this control's written and verbal statements. Yet here again there is another puzzling point, for, although the Scott control had manifested on several previous occasions, at this sitting Nelly did not recognise who the control was until the full name was written just after the break in the trance. This control was muttering rather inaudibly, and it did not at first give its name.

Nelly repeated one of the indistinct and incomplete sentences spoken by the *soi-disant* Geoffrey Scott with the preface, "Somebody says." Then later, although I knew who the control was supposed to represent, as I wanted the name to be given, I asked who the control was. Nelly said: "I shall go and find out." It was at this point that there was a break in the trance, and immediately after its resumption the Scott control gave its name in full, and Nelly showed that she had found out who it was.

After this was written Nelly began to grizzle, and said tearfully:—

"You've begun to cheat me again. I want Mrs. Scott. Geoffrey wants his mother."

When Mrs. Thompson woke from the trance I asked her who she thought was going to be the sitter. She replied:—"I thought it was Mrs. Taylor, because the door banged, and also before I came I thought it was going to be Mrs. Taylor." Then, turning to the sitter, she added:—"Banging the door was not a bit like you, Mrs. Scott."

This unfair experiment, all the more unfair when the conditions had already been rendered sufficiently trying by interposing a screen, was, however, justified by its results, for it goes to support the view that the different controls are not merely so many different dramatisations introduced like the puppets of a ventriloquist's show merely to vary what might otherwise degenerate into a monotonous show, but that in some sense they are separate entities, whether creatures of the medium's brain or external intelligences, possessed of different memories and employing also, perhaps, different methods of communication and of acquiring knowledge. And it also furnished an example of Mrs. Thompson's ingenuousness, in so much as she did not attempt to conceal the deductions that she had drawn from the sitter's manner of entering the room.

It seems clear that in the case under discussion the Nelly control was misled either by Mrs. Thompson's incorrect anticipations as to who the sitter would be, or by Mrs. Scott's imitation of Mrs. Taylor's way of walking, or perhaps by both. But the Scott control, which it must be remembered manifested before the entrance of Mrs. Scott, was not misled. One stratum of the medium's consciousness, or one spirit, made a mistake because it depended for its information on the normal consciousness of the medium; another stratum, or another spirit, not depending on any such source and acquiring information in some more authentic manner, and uninfluenced by the error of its fellow-stratum or fellow-spirit, rightly foresaw the identity of the coming sitter; and the trance-personality or the spirit who guessed or knew the truth was, of the two concerned, the one who the more appropriately should have done so. On the spiritistic theory it is simple enough to explain why one spirit should be unaware of the presence of an individual bound to it by no emotional tie, and why the spirit of a dead son should more readily detect his mother's presence or proximity.

I believe that Nelly has sometimes spoken of things which the normal Mrs. Thompson would not have mentioned to me. It is, of course, difficult to say what a person will or will not be reticent about, but some of the more marked instances of Nelly's artless *épanchement* occurred in the earlier sittings when Mrs. Thompson and I were comparative strangers to one another. I do not mean to suggest that Nelly was very much of an *enfant*

*terrible*, but she told some tales out of school for which a child less privileged and one not removed from the sphere of material punishment would, I fancy, have had to suffer.

Still, I should be doing an injustice to Nelly if I gave the impression that she is habitually guilty of grave indiscretions. Her indiscretions were never blazing, but innocent enough, and where other people's concerns were in question she has always proved herself the very soul of delicacy and reserve, I mean in the sense that she was always most careful to refrain from talking about the intimate affairs of former sitters in the presence of strangers, though both about Mrs. Benson's relations and my own she has expressed opinions the reverse of complimentary and in a style quite foreign to Mrs. Thompson's courteous nature.

It will be obvious that under this section many other incidents of the sittings should properly fall, but many such relevant passages have been narrated and discussed in other sections of this paper, and, as it would be tedious to go over old ground simply to treat of the questions involved from a slightly different standpoint, I must leave it to the reader to elicit for himself the significance of such other phenomena as bear upon the relation between the waking and the trance-consciousness of the medium.

#### (5) MRS. THOMPSON'S RECOLLECTIONS ON WAKING FROM TRANCE.

Of late years Dr. Hodgson has made a practice of recording the words spoken by Mrs. Piper during the time that she is waking from trance: and so gradual is the process in Mrs. Piper's case that Dr. Hodgson has been able to distinguish two stages which he calls "Subliminal 1" and "Subliminal 2."

It has also been remarked in the Piper records how often an important name or statement has been shot out as the medium was returning to normal consciousness. I have found no parallel to this type of phenomenon in Mrs. Thompson's trance-utterances. Her egress from trance is as sudden as her entry into it. Using the word almost, if not positively, in its literal sense, one second Nelly is speaking and the next Mrs. Thompson is, if not wide awake, at least awake and talking in her natural voice and manner.

So far as my experience goes, the rule is for Nelly to wind up the séance even if other controls have been talking; and the approaching end of the trance is nearly always heralded by Nelly announcing her departure and bidding good-bye. Sometimes the leave-taking is prolonged, but as a rule lasts only a minute or so. When it is prolonged, this seems to me to have been due to one of two reasons:—either Nelly appears to be unable to disentangle herself, so to speak, from the medium's organism, or else she is unwilling to go because she wants to enjoy a little human gossip. But when she does depart the severance is instantaneous and complete, and accomplished in nearly every case without any sign of disturbance or perturbation, bodily or mental. There are no contortions, no groaning and travailing; and so, if we are to follow Dr. Hodgson in his estimate of the character of Mrs. Thompson's trance, we must conclude that she has missed this obvious opportunity for the display of effective and easily simulable pantomime.

But though her trance presents no analogies to Mrs. Piper's in this particular respect, still her waking memory is often affected by what has occurred during trance, and I accordingly propose to put together all the instances that are to be found in the sittings under discussion where this infiltration of the normal consciousness is exhibited.

*Dr. van Eeden's sitting on November 29th, 1899.*

On awaking from trance Mrs. Thompson spontaneously remarked that she had been in the Jewish sphere: "Only Jews there. Be sure to tell Mr. Myers." She added that she had been there once before, but forgot to mention it, and that a lady in this sphere had said to her: "You forgot to say what I told you on your last visit here, that you had been very good to my relative." (The message Mr. Myers found quite intelligible: a Jewish friend of his had recently had a good sitting.)

Here the medium's post-trance recollections of her experiences during trance were independent of the trance communications, which had nothing whatever to do with Jews. Nelly had stated in the course of the sitting that her mother had gone

away with Mrs. Cartwright and another control to 'her own house,' that is, the sphere inhabited by these controls; and unless we are to suppose that after this visit Mrs. Cartwright, Vergil-like, conducted Mrs. Thompson to the Jewish sphere, there is a contradiction between the trance-dream and the post-trance memories.

*Dr. van Eeden's second sitting on December 1st, 1899.*

Nelly's last words were:—"Why! That's 'Talks like a Dutchman.'" I asked Mrs. Thompson when she awoke, which she did almost as the last word was uttered, what she had heard last as she came out of trance. Her reply was:—"She's talking Double-Dutch, or something like that."

*Dr. van Eeden's fourth sitting on December 4th, 1899.*

On awaking the medium said she felt as if at the top of a high building. In the course of this sitting the following words had been spoken:—"You went up a lot of steps round and round, and both stood at the top looking. He was very fond of talking and thinking about stars—astrology." It is immaterial whether these words were to the point or not: what is material is that the medium received and retained a sympathetic physical sensation resulting from an impression experienced during the trance.

*Mrs. Benson's first sitting on December 18th, 1899.*

This was one of the occasions referred to above when Nelly seemed to find a difficulty in going away. As there appeared no chance of any further reference being made to Mrs. Benson's affairs I reminded Nelly of a promise that she had given to try to see what Mr. Myers was doing at a given moment during his absence abroad.

Nelly then said:—"He looks to me as if he was going through some papers that he ought to have left alone and not bothered about. They were a species of work, but not examination papers. He's in a room with a slippery floor—not much carpet. 'Orthodox' was one word on Mr. Myers' papers, and 'sincerity.' It's like printed paper—not writing; yet it's on writing paper."

The trance soon came to an end; and I told Mrs. Thompson that Nelly had had a vision of Mr. Myers, but did not tell her any details. She thereupon said:—"I saw him reading the *Times* in an armchair with plain red back. I didn't actually see *Times*, but I sensed it was the *Times* because of the size. The walls were in panels, windows down to the ground—a very lofty room. He was wearing his glasses to read."

Mr. Myers commented as follows on these statements:—"True description of reading room at Hôtel Royal, San Remo, where I used to read the *Times*, but not very distinctive perhaps."

No one of the things said either by Nelly or by Mrs. Thompson, either about Mr. Myers' occupation or about the room, was sufficiently distinctive in my opinion to warrant attributing any such correspondence as there might or may have been to anything more than guess-work: the interest lies rather in the differences observable in the two versions given by Nelly and Mrs. Thompson respectively.

Mrs. Thompson supplements Nelly's account, and in no particular duplicates it, though she contradicts it in one particular: namely, the subject of Mr. Myers' reading. I have omitted a passage which followed immediately on Nelly's description of her vision of Mr. Myers and immediately preceded the awakening from trance, because it relates to an incident belonging to the *vie intime* of Mr. Myers' family. It was just the kind of incident that Nelly would delight to seize upon; but, whether from a discreet reticence or not, Mrs. Thompson made no reference to it; so either she shared only a part of Nelly's perception, or displayed a reserve natural to herself, but foreign to Nelly. I incline to the second alternative, for I have on several occasions noticed that Nelly has not hesitated to divulge matters which I feel confident the normal Mrs. Thompson would have kept to herself.

*Sitting of January 16th, 1900.*

This sitting was remarkable as affording what at least to me appeared to be one of the most clinching tests of Mrs. Thompson's *supernormal* powers. A series of communications had pur-

ported to come, for the most part directly, from the spirit whom I call Mr. D. I had never heard the D. control, and had not the least notion at that time who it was supposed to represent. I merely knew that there was such a control, and that the communications made by him or relating to him were said to be specially good.

The sitters on January 16th were Mr. Lionel Earle and a lady, whose name I did not and do not know. Neither were in any way connected with Mr. D.

Early in the sitting (which, so far as the sitters were concerned, was a thoroughly bad one) Nelly said:—"Mr. D. has told Mother a secret. Ask Mother when she wakes up."

There was a break in the trance, and Mrs. Thompson, without any question being put to her, said:—"I feel rather muddled. I did see Mr. D., and he said" (certain words).

Shortly afterwards the trance came on again, and then, when it was finally over, Mrs. Thompson stated that Mr. D. had a certain nervous habit, and said that she had learnt this fact from Mr. D. directly, who had shown himself to her and exhibited the nervous habit several times in order to impress it on her memory. Mr. D. had further told her that "Nelly was not right about the first message." He "said that the first message had not been delivered correctly, but that it wasn't worth the trouble of correcting it."

I applied to a former sitter whom the D. communications immediately concerned for verification of the statements contained in the two messages. He replied that, although the first message seemed to have been muddled in transmission, he thought he understood what had been intended. The second message he declared was absolutely correct, and he asserted that in his opinion, and for reasons which he explained to me, and which struck me as well-grounded, Mrs. Thompson could not by any ordinary methods have been cognisant of the fact contained in the second message.

But I am not so much concerned with the evidential worth of the messages as with the curious aspects of the medium's consciousness exemplified in the method of their delivery.

Nelly announces that Mr. D. has told her mother a secret, which she will repeat when she awakes. Mrs. Thompson delivers the message when she wakes for the first time, and



when trance comes on again and Nelly recommences speaking she does not enquire if the message has been given, or evince any curiosity about it; nor does she announce, as in the first instance, the delivery of a second message. Mrs. Thompson, when she wakes from the trance for the second and final time, describes her interview in the spirit-world with Mr. D., and how she became acquainted with the fact of his having possessed a certain nervous habit. She then added—and this is the curious point—that “Nelly was not right about the first message”; Mr. D. “said that the first message had not been delivered correctly.”

There is a strange confusion here, for Nelly had nothing to do with delivering the first message; it was delivered by Mrs. Thompson herself when she awoke from trance.

It may be that, although Mrs. Thompson actually voiced the first message, Nelly was instrumental in impressing it upon the mind of her mother at the moment of waking. If this was the *modus operandi* it would explain the remark attributed to Mr. D.; though it would still remain to be explained how it was that Mrs. Thompson did not detect the discrepancy.

Against this explanation must be set the fact that the first message referred specifically to Nelly by name, and had Nelly known the purport of it, to judge from the interest which she has displayed on other occasions when any reference has been made to herself, she would not have passed the matter over in silence during the second part of the séance.

As an alternative explanation, one might suppose that the communicating spirit, Mr. D., was unaware of the method of transmission, and imagined that Nelly's intermediary was essential.

Conjectural hypotheses in this style might be extended indefinitely and lead to nothing profitable: I set no store by my own suggestions, and I make them more for the purpose of laying stress on the fact of there being a difficulty than in the hope of solving it.

It could be argued that the confusion was a slip on the part of the medium, who was off her guard for a moment, and had overlooked the fact that she was pretending for the occasion to be in direct communication with the spirit-world; but

this does not appeal to me as a likely solution, and the perplexity appears to be such as we might reasonably expect to present itself in a case of multiple personality like Mrs. Thompson's, where the shifting of the two predominant centres of consciousness is effected with so much ease and rapidity.

*Sitting of February 1st, 1900.*

At this sitting Nelly, as usual, controlled at first. Suddenly in the middle of the sitting another control appeared, spoke a dozen words, and promptly gave way to Nelly again. Nelly at once said that Mrs. Cartwright would come to explain the momentary and irrelevant intrusion of the unfamiliar control. From that point to the end of the sitting Mrs. Cartwright and Nelly spoke in turns, and a most amusing scene ensued, Mrs. Cartwright casting reflections on Nelly's way of doing her work, and Nelly bobbing in and out to mimic Mrs. Cartwright's pompous and platitudinous manner and diction, and to complain of her dictatorial airs.

Nelly, as usual, wound up the sitting, and put in a parting shot:—"Mrs. Cartwright thinks I'm illiterate. 'She always thought life not worth living, if you weren't obeyed.' Mrs. Cartwright says I'm to come before I talk 'insipid nonsense' (mimicking Mrs. Cartwright's voice and accent). Her compliments come thick and fast."

Mrs. Thompson remarked on waking:—"I've been back to my old school at Wenlock, where Mrs. Cartwright was. I saw Mrs. Cartwright."

We may assume with confidence that there was a casual connection between the medium's trance-dream and the trance-utterances; but which was cause and which effect may be open to discussion, though it seems more probable that the business of the trance-drama suggested the dream than *vice versa*.

*Sitting of February 6th, 1900.*

This was one of two sittings where I was present alone; the bulk of the communications concerned myself, but longish reference was made to Mrs. Benson, and Nelly also described a peregrination to Dr. van Eeden's home, and spoke briefly of matters connected with "Mr. Wilson."

Actually the last words spoken by Nelly were a prediction of the date of my next sitting, but this was immediately preceded by the following:—

“Canon, then Bishop, Bowlby—he came and talked through mother. You know that old gentleman Mr. Benson ; he was an extreme friend of his. He told mother. He has been talking to mother. He was very well known. He was a friend of grand-mama Middleton. He was very pompous. Mother used to throw chocolate-creams about at his confirmation class.”

A few seconds after coming out of trance Mrs. Thompson said :—“ I’ve been among the eminent divines. Canon Bowlby told me I threw chocolate-creams during confirmation class, and that ‘ he knew Benson ’ (repeating the last three words carefully). I saw the Rev. W. T. Taylor, Rector of Oldbury, and the other was Linskell, Rector of Beaudesert, in Warwickshire.”

Although here, as in the last instance, the subject of the closing sentences of the trance-utterances and of Mrs. Thompson’s waking recollections was allied, there is this difference between the two cases.

In the first the medium’s trance-dream corresponded with the trance-drama only in a general way, namely, only to the extent that she found herself back at her old school and in the company of her old school proprietress when Mrs. Cartwright had been playing a prominent *rôle* in the trance-drama ; in this second instance the correspondence was detailed, and, allowing for the characteristic variation in the versions of Nelly and of Mrs. Thompson, the trance-utterance and the post-trance memory pertained to the same incident. Again, in the one case Nelly seemed to be unaware of Mrs. Thompson’s trance-dream and to gather no information from it, while in the other she not only knew of it, but profited by it to the extent of acquiring a new fact, namely, the existence of some connection between Bishop Bowlby and Archbishop Benson.

I note in passing an important and extremely characteristic distinction between Nelly’s version and Mrs. Thompson’s. Nelly said that Archbishop Benson was “ an extreme friend ” of Bishop Bowlby’s, whereas Mrs. Thompson makes use of a much less strong expression, namely, “ he knew Benson.” Nelly’s statement was untrue ; Mrs. Thompson’s was perfectly correct. Exaggerated forms of expression are much indulged in by Nelly,

and many of her statements would have been nearer the mark if she had exercised a greater reserve in her language.

After the trance of April 19th, 1900, Mrs. Thompson had no recollection of any dreams. At a few other sittings I failed to remember to ask Mrs. Thompson if she recollected any experience during the trance, or, if I did ask her, she gave a negative reply which I omitted to record. The interest and possible importance of these post-trance memories did not at first strike me, or I should have been careful to interrogate the medium regularly.

*Dr. van Eeden's Seventh Sitting of June, 7th 1900.*

In the middle of this sitting Nelly announced that she was going away for two minutes. Thereupon Mrs. Thompson awoke and said:—"I smell some sort of anæsthetic stuff like chloroform. I can taste it in my mouth. I was dreaming about being chloroformed, and your trying to wake me up."

Before this point what purported to be the spirit of a dead friend of Dr. van Eeden's who had made an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide had been trying to control the medium, though with only partial and momentary success. When the trance was resumed after this break the control seemed to Dr. van Eeden to become complete.

Dr. van Eeden (see *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., p. 110) comments on Mrs. Thompson's waking sensation as follows:—"This is very remarkable, the taste being probably that of iodoform, which was used in healing the wound in the throat of my dead friend. Mrs. Thompson, in reply to inquiry, said that she did not know the smell of iodoform."

Dr. van Eeden notes also that since the previous sitting two days before Mrs. Thompson had had a peculiar cough quite unusual to her that was like the suicide's cough. And Mr. Myers further noted that Mrs. Thompson had told him that this huskiness began when she first saw Dr. van Eeden on his second visit to England, and had continued throughout his stay, and went off half an hour after his departure (see *ibid.*, p. 108).

For convenience' sake I have classed these two and also subsequent instances of physical sensations persisting after trance under the same head as post-trance memories. But this classi-

fication is perhaps superficial. The physical sensations would appear to follow "possession" by a *soi-disant* discarnate spirit who in life had suffered from corresponding symptoms, whereas the post-trance memories either bear only a general affinity to the subject matter of the trance-communications or, as in one case, have nothing in common with them.

The case where the medium on waking felt as if she were at the top of a high building seems to fall into an intermediate class half way between physical sensibility and a purely subjective impression aroused by memory.

*Sitting of January 3rd, 1901.*

Edward Horace Percival, son of Mrs. Percival, one of the sitters on this occasion, purported to control during some time. He had died from an attack of measles, and, as was stated at a former sitting, his breathing had been difficult during the illness. He controlled on two occasions, and each time the medium's breathing during trance was laboured, and she coughed or wheezed a good deal. On January 3rd, 1901, Mrs. Thompson awoke from the trance groaning and muttering, and said:—"I'm wide awake. I'm only muttering. I could hear myself muttering. Oh! dear, I'm asthmatical." Shortly afterwards she wrote a message while awake which purported to come from Edward Horace Percival. This was one of the only two occasions on which I witnessed any control other than Nelly bring a séance to a termination.

*Sitting of January 11th, 1901.*

In the first part of this sitting Edward Horace Percival controlled for a short time, and while Nelly was speaking messages were being written automatically by Mrs. Thompson's hand and in her natural handwriting, of which it was evidently implied that he was the author. There was a break in the middle of the sitting which had been immediately preceded, not by the Percival control but, by the Nelly control. During the interval the sitters, Mr. and Mrs. Percival, who had been hidden from Mrs. Thompson's view by a screen, retired into another room. Mrs. Thompson, hearing some one coughing in the next room, remarked:—"It's some one with a funeral cough, isn't it?" Then,

after speaking of an impression which she had had the night before, she said:—"I feel asthmatical—a sort of tightness—a difficulty in breathing and cough"; and during the whole interval, which lasted eight minutes, she exhibited in a slightly modified form the symptoms of Edward Horace Percival when controlling.

After the sitters had left, and without any break in the trance occurring, first a control which purported to be Professor Sidgwick appeared for the first time, and then the control whom I call Mr. D. spoke and wrote for about half an hour, and brought the sitting to a close without Nelly reappearing.

When Mrs. Thompson awoke she said:—"I'm sure that was Mr. D."

I asked why. "Because I feel so different," she replied. I then asked if she remembered anything, to which came the answer:—"No. Oh! yes, I do. I remember hearing Professor Sidgwick stuttering, and I thought to myself he might have dropped the stutter when he got to heaven. He was dressed in just ordinary clothes."

*Sitting of January 21st, 1901.*

The sitters were Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Raggett, and so far as they were concerned the séance was an entire failure. After they had left, the Sidgwick control spoke for a short time and, at the conclusion of a sentence which had been got out with a seemingly great effort, Mrs. Thompson awoke suddenly, and in reply to my question said she had no recollections, but was "happier now." Nelly reappeared for an instant, and then the trance was finally over.

*Sitting of July 16th, 1901.*

Mr. and Mrs. Percival attended this sitting. Mrs. Cartwright controlled throughout, and though the communications were almost exclusively concerned with the Percivals' son he did not control.

The first object presented to the medium was a boy's cap, the lining of which bore the name of the shop at which it had been purchased, "Hookham & Co., Oxford." Mrs. Cartwright said:—"I am taken to Oxford."

Almost immediately Mrs. Thompson awoke and said that while

asleep she had seen herself writing "Oxford." She had not really done so, nor, indeed, so far as the rather scanty record of the sitting goes to show, was any automatic script executed during this séance.

Parenthetically I would note the artless way in which Mrs. Thompson on waking from trance was stupid enough (if she will pardon me the phrase) to draw attention to the fact that an object handed to her contained a clue of which undoubtedly the trance-personality made use, no matter whether consciously or unconsciously. This is hardly the behaviour of an impostor; but treat it as a genuine phenomenon, and it at once falls into line with other recognised phases of multiple personality, which not infrequently manifests an overlapping of two generally discontinuous strata of consciousness.

The cap was obviously a boy's cap, and obviously also a school cap; and Nelly drew the correct inference that the wearer of the cap had been at Oxford, not as an undergraduate, but as a school boy.

But the cap afforded even another and more definite piece of information, namely, the name of the wearer, for clearly marked in ink on a tape affixed to the inside, and right in the centre of the inside, and in large bold letters, was the name, "E. H. Percival."

This, too, Mrs. Cartwright gave early in the sitting, though in the form Edward Horace Percival, a correct interpretation of the initials.

It was not till more than a year after the sitting that it was noticed that the cap bore these indications; but Mrs. Thompson could not have counted on such an oversight, or even if she had, she would hardly have run the risk of drawing attention to the source of her information by a reference on waking to one of the words in the cap. Although at the sitting of July 16th, 1900, the Christian names Edward Horace were given in their correct order, and in the order indicated by the inscription in the cap, and though Mrs. Cartwright spoke of him by the name Edward, on subsequent occasions the names occur in the automatic script in the reversed order, Horace Edward, and Nelly speaks always of Horace, though Edward was the name by which the boy was called at least during the greater part of his life by his family and friends.

This failure to give the names in the proper order at later sittings may have been due to a lapse of memory on the part of the medium, but it is at any rate worth noting that the names were not correctly given and then transposed by the same trance-personality, but that Mrs. Cartwright gives them in the right and Nelly in the wrong sequence. The Percival control writes his names in the wrong order.

*Sitting of January 1st, 1901.*

This sitting was a very poor one as far as the sitter, Miss Bates, was concerned, though in the course of it Nelly described two of her peregrinations.

Nelly gave a long account of an incident which had occurred in Paris, and in which four persons, including Miss Bates, were mixed up. After the sitting Miss Bates pointed out to me that Mrs. Thompson had probably learnt of the incident through a certain lady, Mrs. S., well known to her. On waking Mrs. Thompson exclaimed:—"I've got a splitting headache." Throughout the whole séance Nelly had been extremely cross and restless.

Two days later, I having made not the slightest allusion to the matter, Mrs. Thompson, before going into trance on January 3rd, 1901, asked me whether Nelly had repeated any gossip to Miss Bates about the four people in question, because directly she saw Miss Bates after the trance when the screen was removed, she felt a conviction that Nelly had been talking about a matter which Mrs. S. (the lady mentioned above) had related to her. I then, without telling Mrs. Thompson what Nelly had said, asked her to give me Mrs. S.'s version of the affair: which she did. It corresponded fairly closely with the version given by Nelly, due allowance being made for the natural difference between a child's and a grown-up woman's version of a piece of rather silly grown-up gossip.

In short, as Miss Bates rightly conjectured, the incident described by Nelly was perfectly well known to Mrs. Thompson.

It would be ludicrous to hold that reproduction in the trance of knowledge consciously possessed by the medium is indicative of fraud. What *prima facie* is more suspicious is the medium's knowledge of what had been spoken about in the trance. But



Mrs. Thompson's suspicion that Nelly had been repeating a story known to herself is not an isolated phenomenon, as we have already seen, but can be paralleled by the instance just quoted where, when not entranced, she remembered seeing herself writing the word Oxford which had been within her visual range when entranced and which Nelly had previously uttered.

Instances have been or will be quoted (see pp. 161, 224-5, 272) where Mrs. Thompson showed knowledge of what had taken place in the trance: though in some of these cases she claims to have received her information from Nelly. Complete amnesia then is not a characteristic of Mrs. Thompson's trance, and in this she differs from Mrs. Piper.

Now if Mrs. Thompson is an impostor, it is fair to assume that she wishes to imitate, if not to rival, the phenomena of Mrs. Piper. Why then should she here have failed to model her performance on this classical case, and to imitate this essential characteristic of Mrs. Piper's trance? There are, of course, many and important resemblances between the two; but there are also some important differences. Thus, while Dr. Hodgson believes as the result of his long, acute and searching investigation that Mrs. Piper "is entirely ignorant of what occurs during trance," the same cannot be said of Mrs. Thompson. Again "Phinuit is, or pretends to be equally unaware of the knowledge possessed by Mrs. Piper, and of the incidents which happen to her in her ordinary life." Nelly neither is, nor pretends to be similarly ignorant. But, it might be argued, Mrs. Thompson's knowledge of what has occurred during trance is only very rarely manifested, and she occasionally drops the pretence of complete amnesia deliberately in order to cover the cases in which she has done so inadvertently. There would, I admit, be cause for such a suspicion if it were not that, unlike Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Thompson has on several occasions shown that trance is not an essential condition for the exercise of her supernormal faculties. I shall give the evidence for this statement later on (see pp. 182-196), and in the meanwhile I shall content myself with showing the bearing which this fact has on the point under discussion.

If there is good evidence to show that Mrs. Thompson in her normal state can possess herself of knowledge which could not have reached her in an ordinary way, then there is nothing

inconsistent in her claim to occasional acquaintance with what has passed during the trance.

It is simpler to imagine that the source of this acquaintance is Nelly, no matter whether Nelly be a secondary consciousness or a spirit ; but there are of course less shadowy personalities on whom she might draw telepathically, namely, the sitter, the recorder or any one who has read the record of a sitting.

*Sitting of December 20th, 1900.*

As she was in the act of waking from trance, Mrs. Thompson grasped at some books lying on a writing-table by which she was sitting, and said in a rather excited and startled way:—"I saw a hand on the top of these books." Neither my hand nor the hand of the sitter had been on the table, nor had anything occurred during the trance to suggest the idea of a hand.

*Sitting of January 8th, 1901.*

At intervals during this sitting Geoffrey Scott was controlling, and the medium was rather restless. The end of the trance was abrupt and sudden. Nelly was speaking and the Scott control speaking or writing short unfinished sentences in quick succession, and in the middle of a written sentence the medium began to wake. She was shuddering and muttering, and, as she was at the point of regaining consciousness, she said, "Feef" (pronouncing these three letters just as Nelly usually pronounces the first syllable of the word "fearfully"). "I hate it—this treatment" (very emphatically). Then when quite awake, she added:—"I felt such a bang. I thought some one knocked me. I seemed to be looking somewhere, and then some one seemed to shove their elbow into me and knock me away."

I ought, perhaps, to have treated this as a third exception to the general rule throughout this series of sittings that Nelly brings a séance to an end; but I hesitated to do so, because the words "Feef—I hate it—this treatment" cannot be attributed to the Scott control, and ought, perhaps, to be ascribed to Nelly. If, however, they were really spoken by the barely conscious Mrs. Thompson, then the Scott control

was the last to manifest before the medium came to; and it would then be rather singular that these three exceptions occurred at successive sittings, namely, at those held on January 1st, 3rd, and 8th, 1901.

Beyond the fact that the medium seemed disturbed throughout the trance, and that Mrs. Thompson seemed a little agitated when she woke up, she was not thrown from her chair, nor did she sustain any physical injury as on another occasion which I have described elsewhere (see pp. 147-8), when Nelly attributed, and, as I think, wrongly attributed, the mishap to the unsuccessful and unskilful efforts of Geoffrey Scott to control.

(6) THE EXERCISE OF SUPERNORMAL FACULTY BY MRS. THOMPSON  
WHEN NOT ENTRANCED.

An instance of a veridical crystal-vision obtained by Mrs. Thompson when not in trance has already been recited (see pp. 112-114), and I now proceed to give another and in my opinion much more remarkable instance of her acquisition,—I do not say when in a normal state, but, at least, when not in trance,—of information which could not have reached her apparently by any recognised channel. As both these cases occurred when Mrs. Thompson was alone at home, it is, of course, impossible to express any opinion as to her condition at the time; but later other similar cases will be described which took place in my presence, and on these occasions Mrs. Thompson was to all outward seeming wide awake; indeed much more so than many other people ever appear to be, even at the best of times.

*Incident of May 24th, 1900.*

On May 24th, 1900, Mrs. Thompson gave a sitting at my house. Mr. Myers acted as recorder and I was not present, and had not attended any sitting since April 19th. After the sitting, Mrs. Thompson came upstairs to the drawing-room to have tea, and, before tea was served, she told me the story

which is given below in her own words, except for a few alterations introduced by myself in order to conceal the identity of a person mentioned by Mrs. Thompson.

*Mrs. Thompson's Account.*

*May 24th, 1900.*

On Monday, May 7th, 1900, about 7.30 in the evening, I happened to be sitting quite alone in the dining-room, and thinking of the possibility of my "subliminal" communicating with that of another person—no one in particular. I was not for one moment unconscious. All at once I felt some one was standing near, and quickly opened my eyes, and was very surprised to see—clairvoyantly, of course—Mr. J. G. Piddington.

I was very keen to try the experiment: so at once spoke to him aloud. He looked so natural and life-like I did not feel in the least alarmed.

I commenced:—

"Please tell me of something I may afterwards verify to prove I am really speaking to you."

*J. G. P.*:—"I have had a beastly row with ——" [naming a specified person].

*R. T.*:—"What about?" (No answer to this.)

*J. G. P.*:—"He says he did not intend to annoy me, but I said he had been very successful in doing so, whether he intended to or not."

After saying this he disappeared, and I began to wonder if there was any truth in what I had heard from—what appeared to me to be—Mr. Piddington. I did not like to write and to ask him if it was so. On May 24th, I had an opportunity of telling him, and was very surprised to hear it was the truth.

I also told him I had guessed at the subject of the "beastly row." My conjecture was quite accurate.

(Signed)      ROSALIE THOMPSON.

*P.S.*—People often ask me how I talk with Nelly: just as I talked with Mr. Piddington on May 7th. I seem to see and feel what they are saying. The lips appear to move, but they make no audible sound. Yet unless I speak aloud they do not seem to understand me. I have tried Nelly when she

appears to me by asking mental questions, but she does not understand unless I speak aloud and very clearly.

R. T.

Writing to Mr. Myers on May 30th, 1900, I expressed myself as follows :—

I entirely endorse Mrs. Thompson's account. I made her describe the incident *in full* before saying whether the story corresponded in any way with actual facts.

One point I think Mrs. Thompson has omitted from her account. I feel nearly certain that she described herself as having been aware that the quarrel was conducted by correspondence, as was the case, and not *vis à voce*. The correspondence took place between April 28th and May 1st. Mrs. Thompson's experience was on May 7th. . . . I think it highly improbable that Mrs. Thompson could have had any knowledge of the "beastly row" in an ordinary way, and of the fact that my correspondent professed to have had no desire to annoy me, and of my observation thereon, impossible. I do not remember, and have no means of recalling, what I was doing about 7.30 p.m. on May 7th—probably dressing for dinner.

It was this experience of Mrs. Thompson's which compelled my belief in her supernormal powers. At the time I saw no way of getting round it and I see no way now. But to my great regret I do not feel myself at liberty to disclose all the circumstances. The case must accordingly lose much of its evidential value, and I therefore cannot hope that it will produce on others the same conviction that it has on myself.

The quarrel, as has been already explained, was conducted entirely by correspondence. My correspondent is a person whom Mrs. Thompson has never seen. He lives in the country, and though he has, since the date of this incident, heard of Mrs. Thompson he has never seen her, and takes no interest in her or her phenomena, and indeed is, I gather, mildly hostile to psychical research. From him Mrs. Thompson most certainly did not obtain the facts. Could she have got them from me or through her acquaintance with me, or by picking up information on one of her visits to my house?

The facts connected with the quarrel were known to only three or four persons, of whom only one except myself, namely, my wife, was or is known to Mrs. Thompson. My wife did not

mention the subject to Mrs. Thompson: and it is not a subject which I should ever have thought of mentioning to her. The person with whom I quarrelled wrote me two letters. These two letters were kept among a mass of others in a room at the top of my house into which Mrs. Thompson has never been: she has never even been on the floor on which the room is.

My correspondent's statement that he had not intended to annoy me was contained in a letter addressed to my wife. She read this letter to me at breakfast one morning, and almost immediately afterwards destroyed it. I believe the actual words that I said to my wife when she read the phrase from the letter were:—"Then he succeeded admirably without intending to."

It will be remarked that Mrs. Thompson guessed at the subject of the quarrel after the vision had passed, and guessed it correctly. Had Mrs. Thompson got no further than the fact and the subject of the quarrel, I should not have thought so much of it. Possibly even if she had been very lucky she might have guessed the sort of person with whom I was at loggerheads; and though I should have been surprised, I should not have been deeply impressed. But the two other details—my correspondent's disclaimer of intent to annoy and my observation thereon—I know she could not have learned and I do not believe she could have guessed.

I am only too conscious of how this case suffers from the reticence with which the circumstances compel me to treat it. But even had I been able without offending *contra bonos mores* to publish the full details without reserve or modification, I could not expect it to create on others the deep impression that it did on me. I can satisfy myself and yet fail to satisfy others of the inaccessibility to Mrs. Thompson of all normal sources from which knowledge of the facts could have been drawn.

But it is not only the veridicality of the vision, but also the form of it which deserves attention.

With eyes open and experiencing no conscious lapse of consciousness Mrs. Thompson sees and cross-examines a phantasm of the living. The phantasm refuses to answer one question, and after it has vanished the percipient guesses—consciously guesses—makes a shot at—the answer, and guesses right. Was this mere dramatisation? or do we here get a hint of a combination of processes which may play a great part in clairvoyant

phenomena? that is, a combined exercise of supernormal faculty and of normal inference either from facts previously known or from knowledge just supernormally received?

It seems to me now, and it seemed to me at the time, that it is just possible that when once Mrs. Thompson had learnt that I had had "a beastly row" and that that row had been between myself and a certain person, she might by a lucky shot have hit on the subject of the row.

Is there, though, something more than this? I fancy there may be. Something, namely, that confirms the correctness of the deduction normally arrived at. Thus I imagine that though Mrs. Thompson may have through the exercise of her ordinary mental faculties have guessed at the subject of my quarrel, some other faculty was called into play to confirm the truth of the inference: and whatever that other suppositional faculty is, I conceive that it is akin to telepathy and supernormal.

*Incident of October 21st, 1902.*

Copy of a letter addressed by me to Sir Oliver Lodge on October 21st, at 7.15 p.m., and read by him on October 22nd, 1902, and endorsed to that effect:—

I am making a note of something that occurred this afternoon with Mrs. Thompson in the form of a letter to you, so that if anything further happens, there will be evidence to show what my recollections and impressions were this evening.

I met Mrs. Thompson by appointment at 20 Hanover Square, downstairs in the front hall, at 5 p.m. this afternoon. I came down from the S.P.R. rooms to meet her, and found her, as arranged, awaiting me in the hall. At any rate then she had not had a chance of seeing any letters written by or to Mr. Thomas. (You will see the bearing of this remark later on.) We then went to get some tea, and she talked on various subjects. Just as she was bidding me good-bye she suddenly said:—

"What about Kiel?"

I said:—"What do you mean?"

"When you were talking about going abroad soon I somehow got an impression of Kiel."

"Well, anything else?"

"So then I began to visualize, and I got a picture of an (?old) gipsy woman with a (?red) shawl over her head (or round her head)."

"Anything more?"

"No; but does it mean anything?"

"Yes, it has some meaning, but I am not going to tell you anything more. If you get any further impressions, let me know. Anyhow, write it down as soon as you get home, and send it to me. When, by-the-way, did you first get the impression?"

"Oh! when we were talking of Polly's varicose veins." (I had asked Mrs. Thompson to meet me in order to obtain from her some information bearing on a statement made by Nelly about a lady who suffered from varicose veins.)

Then we parted.

Before meeting Mrs. Thompson I had wondered whether she would have had an impression of Mr. Thomas's anxieties, which are connected with some friends living at Kiel, and, although I did not actually say the word "Kiel" to myself, Kiel was definitely connected with my passing fancy.

A friend of Mr. Thomas's has lately been consulting a fortune-teller at Kiel. I don't remember Mr. Thomas describing the fortune-teller as a gipsy (though he may have done so), and I feel fairly certain that he never mentioned her wearing a shawl over her head.

I don't know if Mrs. Thompson knows of Mr. Thomas's connection with Kiel. I have never been there, and have no association of any kind with the place, though a few days ago my wife and I were discussing its exact geographical position.

Just before I met Mrs. Thompson, Mr. Thomas had written the name of a member of the S.P.R. on a scrap of paper as a memorandum for me. Wishing to make a note of something said by Mrs. Thompson, I took this scrap of paper out of my pocket, and wrote the note on it. Mrs. Thompson then wished to write some names down for me, and took the scrap of paper from me in order to do so. I stopped her from writing on it, as it was too small, and gave her instead another piece of paper. She may have seen and recognised Mr. Thomas's handwriting, which was, however, on the underside, and not on the side on which I had been



writing; and *if* she knew of Mr. Thomas's connection with Kiel, this may have suggested the impression.

But if so why did she connect *me* with Kiel? . . .

Mrs. Thompson, on her return home, wrote me the following letter:—

October 21st, /02.

Why did you say this afternoon when I mentioned about Kiel, "I shall not tell you anything, you must go home and write an account of what you saw and post it to me?"

You said: "I am probably going abroad shortly, so have much work on hand at present." Immediately "Kiel" seemed to flash before me, and then I saw an old-looking, but middle-aged, gipsy woman telling fortunes with a plaid round her, and I think this in some way fell over her head.

I have tried since but can get nothing more, it only seemed a flash. I have never been in Kiel, and know nothing of the place or its people. I think I may sometimes eat Kiel butter!

The following note was written by Mr. N. W. Thomas, and is dated October 23rd:—

After hearing J. G. P.'s letter to Dr. Lodge and Mrs. Thompson's to J. G. P., I note the following points:

I was told by Frau Prof. B[——] that Frau S. (the fortune-teller) had said she learnt her fortune-telling from a (? old) gipsy woman when she was 16. When I saw Frau S. she wore a red dress, but no shawl or plaid.

Frau S. is about 40, and does not look at all like a gipsy.

N. W. THOMAS.

On November 5th, 1902, Mr. N. W. Thomas wrote:—

Fräulein M. B. writes that she went to Frau S. [*i.e.* the fortune-teller] at the end of last week, and found her wrapped in a coloured shawl (over her head, too, I gather).

On October 23rd, 1902, Mr. N. W. Thomas informed me that he felt sure that Mrs. Thompson knew nothing of his connection with Kiel. Mrs. Thompson knew that I visit Brussels, Berlin, Paris, and Berne occasionally, but she could have no reason whatever to suppose that I was going to Kiel, as I have never been, and am not likely to go there.

At the time of this incident I knew that Fraulein B. was seeing a fortune-teller at Kiel, and that Mr. Thomas was interested in the fortune-telling, and was having proper records kept of the fortune-teller's utterances; but, as stated in my letter to Sir O. Lodge, I probably knew nothing of her having learnt her art from a gipsy, nor of her wearing a red or any sort of shawl round her head.

*Incident of October 17th, 1902.*

On the afternoon of October 17th, 1902, Mrs. Thompson had called at 20 Hanover Square; I do not now remember for what purpose. Just as she was going away she said to me:—

“Has Mrs. Finch been up in a balloon? The night after the account appeared in the morning papers of the airship accident I woke up thinking that Mrs. Finch was in the balloon.”

Mrs. Finch is an Australian lady living in Paris, and is known to Mrs. Thompson and myself. Although she is one of the last people in the world whom I should have thought likely to make a balloon ascent, I wrote to Professor Charles Richet, who knows her well, to ask if there was any meaning in Mrs. Thompson's dream.

It appears from M. Richet's reply that Mrs. Finch did make a balloon ascent in July, 1902; though she luckily was not involved in the fatal accident to M. Severo's airship as Mrs. Thompson had dreamt. Mrs. Finch's participation in a balloon ascent in July, 1902, was spoken of not only in the Paris papers but also in the English papers. One French paper at least, *Le Temps*, gave her name and nationality, and possibly, even probably, the English papers copied both items.

Mrs. Thompson may, of course, have seen a mention of a balloon ascent in which an Australian lady took part at Paris, or she may have actually seen it stated that Mrs. Finch made an ascent, but, if so, she had no recollection on October 17th, 1902, of having done so. An incident of this kind can never be evidential, as it is impossible to exclude the chance of Mrs. Thompson having at some time acquired the facts in a normal way. But convinced as I am that Mrs. Thompson has far too clear a grasp of what constitutes

good evidence to waste her time over concocting halting little stories of this kind, I cannot regard this dream impression as other than a perfectly genuine experience, though inconclusive of supernormal faculty. Treating it then as genuine, I suppose that the orthodox view of it would be something of this kind:—

Mrs. Thompson had read in the English or French newspapers in July, 1902, of Mrs. Finch's exploit. (If Mrs. Finch's name was not given in any paper seen by Mrs. Thompson, then it can be supposed that Mrs. Thompson read an account in which Mrs. Finch was merely described as "an Australian lady"; and that probably, not knowing of more than one Australian lady living in Paris, she subconsciously connected the balloonist with Mrs. Finch.) Three months later, when all conscious recollection of Mrs. Finch's balloon ascent has faded completely away, she reads of the Severo airship accident. This suggests the dream, and in the dream-state the submerged memory of Mrs. Finch's balloon ascent is revived, and a characteristically confused dream results. Some such explanation as that is the "correct" one, I should say: it is the line I should advise a candidate for our Research Scholarship to take if he were asked for his comments on this incident. But I am by no means sure that it is the true explanation.

I reject any explanation which supposes fraud on Mrs. Thompson's part, not only on general grounds but also for reasons which result from an examination of what fraud would involve in this instance. Fraud would mean that Mrs. Thompson knew of Mrs. Finch's balloon excursion: had the self-restraint to hold this piece of knowledge in reserve and to wait until another event of aeronautic interest occurred in order to hash up the two together in a form which might perhaps appeal by its subtlety to the jaded appetite of some psychical researcher.

I cannot believe that so intricate a game could be thought by any medium to be worth the candle. But that consideration apart, no one would have been better aware than Mrs. Thompson that the S.P.R. could be relied on to enquire if any knowledge displayed by a medium could have been normally acquired, that in this case the simplest enquiry

would have disclosed a possible source of her knowledge, and that, this possible source once learnt, her pretended dream-impression would be bereft of all evidential value. Against any possible value, too, that she might hope to see attached by a few observers to this incident she must have recognised that there would have to be set the suspicion of others of her having concocted the whole thing.

I reject, then, any explanation which involves fraud; and while I do not reject what I have called the orthodox interpretation, though it involves several suppositions, which, if not unlikely taken separately, are at least not highly probable when taken cumulatively, I am more inclined to adopt the following hypothesis:—namely, that knowledge of Mrs. Finch's balloon ascent had been acquired supernormally by Mrs. Thompson either at or near the time when it took place, or at any rate previously to her dream, and had lain dormant in her subconsciousness until awakened by a natural association of ideas set in motion on her reading about the accident to the airship, and not even then emerging into her full consciousness, but emerging only in a hypnopompic dream, and then again only with the confusion typical of dreams.

I have perhaps treated what at first sight may have the appearance of a very trifling matter at undue length; but in the case of mediums for the genuineness of whose phenomena there is good evidence, I think there is justification for examining closely some of their less full-blown manifestations, their casual by-products as it were, on the chance that we may therefrom gather some hint of the obscure laws at work more readily than from the more well-defined phenomena. And if I have rightly traced the mental processes which engendered Mrs. Thompson's dream we have here in simple form a case analogous to some of the more complex phenomena of her trance.

Thus here knowledge of Mrs. Finch's balloon adventure reaches Mrs. Thompson's subliminal, but does not filter into her supraliminal until after she has read about the air-ship accident. This awakening in the supraliminal consciousness of so closely allied a train of thought appears to have given the subliminal a chance to transmit its knowledge to the supraliminal stratum, not, however, immediately, but on the

first favourable opportunity, namely, the moment between sleeping and waking. Exhausted with its effort, let us suppose, or uninfluenced by the suggestion of the séance room, the subliminal is content to convey its message in an unadorned form; Mrs. Thompson merely thinks that Mrs. Finch was in the balloon.

In what I term Nelly's "peregrinations," to be dealt with in the next section, there is the same apparently supernormal acquisition of knowledge about friends or acquaintances at a distance, the same impenetrability of the supraliminal. Only in these cases no favourable opportunity occurs for the subliminal to communicate its knowledge to the supraliminal. The subliminal, however, gets its chance to impart its news during the trance, and conveys it, not as a simple thought, impressed on the brain at the moment of waking, but with appropriate dramatic detail.

The case where Mrs. Thompson when not in trance seemed to herself to be holding converse with my "astral form" I should regard as intermediate between the dream about Mrs. Finch and the "peregrinations" of Nelly. For in it we seem to see the two divisions of the consciousness in synchronous and no longer disparate activity; the supraliminal not in abeyance as in trance, but able to retain a clear memory of the subliminal's proceedings; the subliminal in full telæsthetic vigour, capable of a partial dramatisation, and yet unable to impose on the alert and sceptical supraliminal the complete stage-business of the spiritistic séance.

*Incident of January 14th, 1903.*

Mrs. Thompson called at the Rooms of the Society on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 14th, 1903, just as some thought-transference experiments were being brought to a close. I asked her to try two experiments with the subjects with whom we had just been working, and under the same conditions; namely, percipient in one room and agent in another. She consented, and two experiments were made, Mrs. Thompson being agent in one and percipient in the other. Neither was successful.

We chatted for a moment or so after this: other people joining in the conversation. As she was preparing to go,

and almost in the act of saying good-bye, and as she was in the act of leaving the room, she turned to me laughing and pointing to my overcoat which was lying over the back of a chair in the neighbourhood of the door, said:—"I'm going to psychometrize your coat. There was some trouble about paying for it: some bad notes."

While speaking these words, in spite of her having used the term "psychometrize," she neither touched the coat nor did she move nearer to it. She was thoroughly wide awake, not in the least dreamy or tranced, but there was a symptom which I did not remark on the other occasions on which when not in trance she described clairvoyant impressions and which I think I may safely say was not then displayed. As she spoke the few words quoted above, a tinge—a smack—a dash—I don't exactly know what to call it—of the Nelly manner came over her; there was the curious unmistakable and characteristic pulling down of one side of the face, which always accompanies the Nelly impersonation, and the half lisp, half simper which is the distinguishing mark of Nelly's utterance. The modification of the voice and manner was momentary, but, though I doubt if a stranger would have remarked it, quite unmistakable to any one familiar with Mrs. Thompson's trance-state.

As to the statement about my great-coat, the coincidence between it and the real facts is not exact, but too close to attribute with confidence to chance.

I had purchased the coat ready-made at a shop where I had not dealt before and was consequently unknown. As I was starting on a journey the next day, I wanted it to be delivered the same evening. I offered in payment a cheque, which I made out in the shop. The sum named in the cheque contained a numeral of two syllables, and this numeral I failed to spell correctly. Feeling doubtful of my orthography I applied to the shopman for information, which he gave me with a condescending though pitying smile. But my failure to spell a very simple word had evidently aroused his suspicions, and a consultation with the shop-manager ensued, which resulted in my being told with many polite expressions of regret that it would be impossible to let me have the coat the same night. I insisted that I must have it the

same night, whereupon another and longer consultation with the manager took place, and I was eventually informed that they much regretted, etc., etc., but the coat could not be delivered to me till the following day, which meant, of course, until there had been time to see if my cheque was good. I then said that I quite understood their hesitation and the cause of it, gave a reference and got my coat the same evening.

I was rather amused by the incident and told my wife about it when I got home, and if I told any one else, it was not at any rate any one from whom Mrs. Thompson is likely to have heard of it. And indeed it seems clear that Mrs. Thompson had not been told of this very trivial episode, for in so far as it had any interest, the interest depended on the details, and if Mrs. Thompson had heard the story at all and reproduced it, the reproduction would have shown traces of the original narrative, whereas the statement made by Mrs. Thompson on January 14th, 1903, is not only not in exact correspondence with the facts, but is as bald as it well could be.

Mrs. Thompson spoke of "bad notes," meaning presumably bad bank notes, whereas I paid by cheque. Without insisting on the point, which is a very small one, I think it just worth remarking that the mention of notes instead of a cheque or cash goes in favour of Mrs. Thompson having gleaned her information supernormally. Bad bank notes are excessively rare in England, and accordingly the chances of a casual reference to bad bank notes having been offered in payment proving relevant must be very remote. If a shot was going to be made at all, the trouble would be more reasonably assigned to a bad cheque, which is not an uncommon thing.

*Incident of March 1st, 1900.*

Professor C. Moutonnier, formerly Professor at the *École des hautes Études Commerciales à Paris*, sent to Mr. Myers the following account of how he made the acquaintance of Mrs. Thompson, and also a record of a sitting which he had with her. It will be seen that Professor Moutonnier is under the impression that Mrs. Thompson did not lose consciousness when

on March 13th, 1900, she met him for the second time in the gardens at Monte Carlo. But I think there can be little doubt that she was really in trance, and if she was, it only shows how very slightly marked are the external differences between her normal and her trance state.

The record of this romantic open-air séance ought strictly not to come under the head of the "Exercise of supernormal faculty when not in trance," but I include it here both for its intrinsic interest, and for convenience of reference, so as not to separate the introductory episode from its interesting sequel.

With regard to her first meeting with Professor Moutonnier, Mrs. Thompson writes:—"I shall never forget the strange impulse which made me *attack* the old folks sitting on the seat with their little dog."

HYÈRES (VAR) VILLA "VAL FLEURI," March 31st, 1900.

DEAR SIR,

I am most happy to comply with your request, and to give you a detailed and true account of my meeting with Mrs. Thompson, and the phenomenon I obtained through her mediumship. It was, indeed, the most remarkable case I ever witnessed, and I hope it may bring some new light to your investigations.

*How I became acquainted with Mrs. Thompson.*

On February the 10th, I received from Prof. C. Richet an invitation to attend some psychical experiments which were to take place at his château at Carqueiranne, together with Professors Myers and James. The names of the mediums he did not mention to me.

Such a great treat I considered most highly, and anticipated the benefit I would be able to derive from the researches of three well-known scientists. But, unfortunately, a second letter answering mine came a few days after, informing me that the Professor was prevented from coming to Carqueiranne, and I had to give up the hope I had been indulging in so much.

I was then on a visit at my daughter's at Monte Carlo, with my family, quite unaware of Mrs. Thompson being at the same place, as I did not know her, either by name or sight.

On the 1st of March, between 10 and 11 A.M., I was sitting on a bench with my wife, in one of the most retired spots of the gardens facing the Casino, where they keep the chamois, and few people go



by. While we were chatting together and commenting the events of the day, I saw coming up to us three persons, a gentleman accompanied by a lady and a little girl, eleven years old. The lady addressed us in English (without knowing our nationality) as old friends, and in such a familiar way as only those already acquainted with the subject could take any interest in her conversation. She told us, *ex abrupto*, and without being questioned, that she came from a château at Carqueiranne belonging to Professor Richet, where she had been staying for some time with the Professors Myers and James, and where Professor Richet was to meet them for some psychical research, but was afterwards prevented from attending.

On my asking her whether she would consider the fact as a mere chance, or attribute it to some unknown cause, she answered that she had been guided to me by her little spirit-girl, notwithstanding that her husband insisted going by another alley; and that, as soon as she perceived us, she saw written before her eyes the word "Carqueiranne," which gave birth to the whole story I just related.

Great was her surprise when I told her we were intimate friends of Professor Richet, and greater still my joy on learning that she was one of the two mediums I was to meet at Carqueiranne. We took leave of Mrs. Thompson and her family after having made an appointment for a regular séance.

#### *A Séance with Mrs. Thompson.*

Our next meeting took place on the 13th of March, at the same spot and the same hour, 11 A.M., by a beautiful sunny day, and in the most romantic resort one could dream of.

Were present: Mrs. Thompson (the medium), and her husband, my wife and self, and my grand-daughter, Violet Fenton, aged seventeen.

After about a quarter of an hour chatting on different topics, Mrs. Thompson—without<sup>1</sup> losing consciousness—was all of a sudden taken hold of by her spirit-girl, who spoke through her in the following manner and terms, written down word by word as uttered from the lips of the medium:—

1. "The lady who is standing back of you says that you have a ring of hers, and you should give it to me.
2. "She mentions that *Long Henry* wants to send a message to the one who was a little girl.

<sup>1</sup>[In the original Mrs. Thompson had here inserted and initialled the word "apparently."—J. G. P.]

3. "*The lady* had white hands, long fingers, and finger-nails like nut-shells.

4. "You have something that belongs to *Harry* in your pocket.

5. "*Long Henry* was very weak, and suffered from the stomach, which caused him to stoop a little.

6. "It seems to me that he died in a foreign country; you remember when you last saw him, he wore a kind of a black coat and a black tie.

7. "*The lady* died and she left a little girl, and she is going to have the ring, but in a long time to come.

8. "There is some one related to *Long Henry*, and he asks if you are still teaching, as you could not very well take care of the babe and do two things together.

9. "When *the lady* died she left a little carved box, you know, to put trinkets into it; you don't know but the *painting lady* knows all about it.

10. "*Harry* says that you have a *stud* that belongs to him. It is not to make you feel bad; but he is very funny, you know; he is rather reserved, dignified, and wants to be somebody.

11. "He was very fond of stretching out his legs, when he was seated; he liked also sticks and had some very funny ones.

12. "He is very pleased that you wear his *stud*, and tells you not to feel bad about it.

13. "It seems to me that he died very unfortunately, when his prospects were at the highest. It was as if it were a premature death.

14. "He knew you to be very kind, but never thought you would have done so much for his babe, as it was a very weak and miserable one.

15. "What made his hands shake so much before he died?

16. "He thinks it is very romantic for his spirit to come in such a beautiful place.

17. "You have *some hair* in your pocket; I wish you gave it to me.

18. "There is a *Marie* connected with it. The hair was first brown and then chestnut color.

19. "The *lady* died; she was quite well and was not to die. I cannot understand why she died.

20. "It seems to me that '*the stud*' and '*the hair*' have some relation between the death of both.

21. "There is also a *George* connected with it. He is in a foreign country and alive.

22. "Now I see water all around and some one is drowning.

23. "It seems as if '*the hair*' had been in the hands of another medium; there is an influence of a stout lady.

24. "*Harry* used to have a seal on the chain of his watch.

25. "*Harry* says that the chestnut hair was that of his darling wife."

Here ended the influence and with it this interesting phenomenon.

### *Explanatory Notes.*

For the sake of a better and clearer understanding of the above message, I have annotated the different sentences.

1. The ring mentioned here was *my daughter's*, and I am wearing it ever since her death on the little finger of my left hand.

(I took it off and handed it to the medium.)

2. *Long Henry* was an intimate friend of ours, a *Dutchman* by birth, but living in Paris. He was very tall and liked my grand-daughter—then a little child—very much.

3. My *daughter's* hands were of a beautiful shape, white, long and tapering.

4. I had in the left inside pocket of my coat a little picture of *Harry*—my son-in-law—(my daughter's husband). I handed it to her; she put it on her forehead, but said she could not get anything from it.

5. *Harry* was Mr. Fenton's Christian name. *Henry's* health had always been very poor, and his tallness caused him to stoop a little. He was taken very ill, two years ago, and resorted to his native country, Holland, where he died amidst his relatives.

6. When we last saw him in Paris—at luncheon—he wore a black cut-away coat and a black necktie.

7. Both my *daughter* and her *husband* died leaving a girl—then six years old, their only child.

8. The person alluded to by *Long Henry* is myself. I was then a professor at the *École des hautes Études commerciales* at Paris.

9. After my *daughter's* death we found many little boxes, where she kept her jewels. I, of course, was ignorant of the fact, but my other *daughter*, her sister (mentioned by the medium as being the *painting lady*, and who is in reality an artist painter) very likely knew all about it.

10. On the very day of the séance I had on my shirt, hidden under my neck-tie, and invisible to any one, *a diamond stud* belonging to my son-in-law. I must say that I was quite unaware having it on that day. *Harry* was rather a dignified and very ambitious man.

11. Like all Americans when at leisure, he used to take an easy position. He was very fond of *sticks* and had kept one of the funniest you can imagine in a trunk in Paris that belonged to him.

12. He died from a neglected cold that settled in his lungs after an illness of eighteen months.

13. He was only 41 years old when he died, and he had indeed a great future before him; being very intelligent, active and ambitious.

14. He died first and his little girl, my grand-daughter, was then very delicate and weak.

15. I could not answer this question, as no one but his wife was at his bedside, when he breathed his last.

16. This place had been selected by the medium.

17. I had in the left inside pocket of my coat wrapped in paper and in an envelope *a lock of my daughter's hair* and a few words written on a note signed by the name of "*Marie*" (her Christian name). I handed the envelope containing the hair to the medium, who put it on her forehead, holding it for some time.

18. My *daughter's hair* was of a chestnut color.

19. My *daughter Marie* caught the influenza from her sister and was taken away in the course of five days by the dreadful plague, February, '92, in the prime of her life, at the age of 29. It was her death that caused me to become a spiritualist.

20. The *stud* was *Harry's* and the *hair Marie's*, as said before.

21. The person mentioned by the name of *George* is the Christian name of my other son-in-law, *Mr. Healy* (the husband of the *painting lady*) who lives at Chicago and is still there.

22. I do not know how to account for this.

23. Never did my *daughter's hair* go out of my possession.

24. *Harry* may have had a seal, as he was very fond of wearing little trinkets; but I do not remember having seen any, nor did I find any after his death.

25. The *hair*, as said before, was my daughter's.

As will be seen from the above message and the explanatory notes,

it is obvious that an outside influence was at work to give to the medium all these minute and private details on family matters only known to us and some of which none of us three were thinking of at the moment of the sitting. Who then prompted her [to give] the names of my children—*Harry, George* (who is in Chicago), *Marie*, and most wonderfully "*Long Henry*"—and all the particulars connected with their private life? *Psychometry, clairvoyance, mind-reading, telepathy* say the men of science; but I would rather call it *spirit influence*, a tie of union between all the worlds of the universe.

This is a true and genuine account of the phenomena obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. R. Thompson.

I hereby certify that neither I nor my wife, nor my grand-daughter had ever seen or heard the name of Mrs. Thompson, nor did any of us ever suspect her existence. We were perfect strangers one to the other, till the day we first met her, on the 1st of March—and since nothing in our conversation could have given her the least hint to enable her to discover anything connected with my family.

Before closing this long letter, I must say that *Long Henry* was conversant with the modern tongues, and understood and spoke English as well as any of us. Moreover, I state that the message was given in a child-like way, and with the genuine accent and pronunciation of a child.

Any other information you may need on this subject I will be glad to give you.

With kindest regards, believe me, Dear Sir, yours truly,  
C. MOUTONNIER, *Prof.*

#### (7) THE PEREGRINATIONS OF NELLY.

Mrs. Thompson's trance exhibits a good many instances of a very distinctive phenomenon, akin to what is called "*clairvoyance à distance*," or "travelling clairvoyance." But I shall not employ the term "*clairvoyance à distance*," because it begs both the distance and the clairvoyance, and has acquired a technical meaning, and also because clairvoyance is frequently used in two or three different senses.

I prefer then to class these phenomena under a non-technical heading, and call them simply "the peregrinations of Nelly." It may be objected that this title assumes that Nelly

peregrinates. I, however, do not mean to assume that, but merely wish, for convenience' sake, to label certain recurrent phases of Mrs. Thompson's psychical manifestations by a term descriptive of their superficial aspect.

Although by using this term I do not commit myself to any particular interpretation of the facts, I have no hesitation in asserting my belief that these peregrinations do really represent to the trance-personality a method of obtaining information quite distinct from the other processes which Nelly calls "talking to spirits," "seeing pictures," or "getting things out of Mother's stomach."

These other processes are in operation during the trance: but the peregrinations are represented as having taken place previous to the trance, the knowledge resulting from them being held over for disclosure at a subsequent sitting.

Some of these voyages of discovery have been already recorded in *Proceedings*, Part XLIV, pp. 112-115, and are all connected with Dr. van Eeden. One which should have been included in this series was omitted by mistake, and I will begin with it.

It occurred at the sitting of December 20th, 1900, and was preceded by a description of a joint visit of Nelly and Elsie (a spirit friend of Nelly's) to Mrs. Piper, which is recorded below, and also by a true description of an incident relating to my little girl, which Nelly may have learnt about during a peregrination to my house, but which I have not included in this series, because she did not actually say that she had thus acquired the information. Mrs. Benson was the sitter, and there was nothing to suggest Dr. van Eeden.

*Nelly*:—"I went to see Brother Boer: that's what Mother calls him: 'Whiskers.' This was truthfully me, not Elsie, on Tuesday the 18th instant. (*Sic*; and spoken as if repeating a lesson.) There's somebody very ill in his house—in his colonisation—very ill."

*J. G. P.*:—"What illness?"

*Nelly*:—"It's something that draws them up very much."

*J. G. P.*:—"Man or woman?"

*Nelly*:—"Woman. I don't mean Sam's mother. *She's* very ill. Sam that was at Paris. Sam High Street (then followed attempts at the name 'van Hoogstraten') not i's in it; all o's

and d's. It's no test to spell the name; because everybody knows it. Sam's mother's very ill; but that's not the person that's drawn up."

I sent a transcript of this to Dr. van Eeden. I can give only the substance of his reply, as unfortunately I have lost or mislaid the original. Luckily the main point does not depend on memory, and can be checked by reference to documentary evidence. Dr. van Eeden found a coincidence in the fact that some days before December 20th, though not on December 18th, a woman in his colony at Bussum had given birth to a child. When I discovered that the letter containing this statement was missing I wrote to Dr. van Eeden asking him if he recollected the incident, and also for details as to the number of men and women in his colony. His answer, dated September 29th, 1903, runs as follows:—

. . . I remember her (Nelly's) statement very well, and the coincidence with the birth of a child at Walden. There were always between 30 and 40 persons at Walden, men, women, and children, and never less than three married women. I have never spoken about Walden and its population to Mrs. Thompson, as far as I remember now, because I always avoided the subject. But Nelly has shown knowledge concerning it on several occasions.

I then asked for the date of the birth of the child, and writing on October 6th, 1903, Dr. van Eeden stated that it was December 9th, 1900.

If this case stood by itself, I should not have thought the problematical coincidence worth narrating; but it is not an isolated instance of apparent perception by Nelly of what took place at Walden, and therefore in spite of the error about the date and the lack of definiteness in her description of the illness, it deserves consideration.

The chief difficulty is the discrepancy between the date named by Nelly and the date of the woman's illness. Nelly as a rule is vague in the matter of dates, which she arrives at generally by saying that something happened the same day as or a day or two before or after some incident in Mrs. Thompson's experience. To the best of my recollection this is one of the only two occasions on which she gave a day of the month (see p. 252), and she brought it out as a child does who is using a

term which it knows sounds well, but of the meaning of which it is not quite sure. If we regard the coincidence as due to supernormal knowledge, it is possible to explain the discrepancy by supposing that either as a result of a peregrination or telepathically Nelly on December 18th first learnt of a past fact, namely, the illness.

Again, *if* there is anything here calling for an explanation on supernormal lines, I would note that Nelly's description of the woman's illness is such as might have been given by a child, who, ignorant of the significance of the symptoms which she had witnessed, failed to draw the inference which an adult would have drawn.

Between December 9th, the date of the confinement, and December 20th, the date of Nelly's account of her peregrination, Mrs. Thompson had given two sittings to Mrs. Verrall on Dec. 14th and 17th; but at neither was anything said about a visit to Dr. van Eeden. Nelly's silence on December 14th and 17th is in favour of the supposition that she acquired her knowledge of the illness after it occurred, and after the sitting of December 17th.

At a sitting held on January 1st, 1901, immediately the trance began, and before the sitter had entered the room, Nelly said to me:—

“Who is that coughing, coughing, coughing in the night—last night—a nasty sounding cough? I couldn't sleep in your house.”

*J. G. P.*:—“Was it last night?”

*Nelly*:—“I think so, but it was the night I tried to sleep at your house.”

*J. G. P.*:—“Did you see anything or anybody?”

*Nelly*:—“I don't know, but I am sure it was Mr. Piddington's house. Where's Mönrrö at your house? Have you got his box there? There's a Mönrrö box at your house. All boxes have a strap round. It was a leather portmanteau box with a strap round, and some white trousers, like football or cricket trousers, perhaps sleeping things in it. I can see them distinctly.”

The facts were these. On the nights of the 29th-30th and 30th-31st December, 1900, I had been disturbed and kept awake for an hour or two by the coughing of one of my



servants who was sleeping in the room above mine. On December 31st I spoke to my wife about it, and advised her to send the servant to see the doctor. The cough probably continued for a night or two after this, but I was not disturbed on the night of December 31st-January 1st. Coughs are common of course in December and January, and though Nelly did not say that I was disturbed by the coughing, it is worth noting that I have to the best of my recollection been disturbed at night by another person's cough only once since the date of this sitting; in other words, on only three or four nights out of about 900 nights would a reference to some one coughing in my house at night have had a special significance for me. I may add that since Nelly mentioned this coughing I have borne in mind to note down any other occasions on which I have been disturbed by coughing at night.

I had not seen Mrs. Thompson for eleven days before the day on which the sitting was held at which Nelly mentioned the coughing, and I certainly did not speak to Mrs. Thompson before the trance about the servant's cough; so she did not learn of the incident from me. Mrs. Thompson also had not been to my house for several months, and the sitting of January 1st, 1901, was not held there, and so she could not have noticed that one of my servants was suffering from a cold. It is not quite clear whether Nelly intended to convey that she had learnt of the existence of a "Monro box" at my house at the same time that she heard the coughing, but I think that this was what she meant. The bare fact of there being such a box in my box-room was true, though I had no conscious knowledge or recollection of it. The other details are probably wrong, except that there was a strap round the portmanteau. In the box-room, which is an out-building, and into which Mrs. Thompson has never been, was at the time of the sitting a portmanteau belonging to Miss Munro, a sister of my wife's. Attached to it was a label bearing the name and address of the owner. I do not think that at any rate at this time Mrs. Thompson knew my wife's maiden name, and if she had heard it she would have heard it pronounced "Münrō," and not "Mōnrō" as Nelly pronounced it. The box was a small portmanteau, a flimsily-built foreign-made thing, of some cardboard kind of material, not leather,

and it did not contain trousers or anything of the sort, and it belonged not to a man but to a woman.

Immediately after this Nelly went on to describe another peregrination, in this case involving possession of a medium in trance.

In the account which follows I have substituted fictitious names for the real ones, but all the people concerned were friends of Mr. Myers', are all known to me and all are members of the S.P.R. The lady whom Nelly purported to have controlled is not a professional medium.

Mr. Myers had written to me as follows:—

Valescure, Dec. 23/00.

"Miss Rawson is here. . . . A sitting yesterday, Dec: 22. At 2.40 French time (*i.e.* 2.30 English) a *soi-disant* Mrs. Thompson possessed Miss R. I don't want to ask Mrs. T. about it—perhaps when you sit next (Jan. 1) you can find out whether anything occurred that day to Mrs. T. She came only for a minute and feebly. I will not tell you the other sitters for evidence sake."

Before the sitting of January 1st, 1901 began I asked Mrs. Thompson how she had spent the afternoon of December 22nd, 1900. I did not of course say why I asked the question, nor did I let her know that I was putting the question on Mr. Myers' behalf.

In reply to my question Mrs. Thompson said:—"I was in the house the whole of Saturday afternoon, December 22nd, talking to a lady. I slept for an hour, probably between 2.45 and 3.45, in an arm-chair in front of the fire in the dining-room. I remember nothing, and did not dream, so far as I am aware. I don't think I was asleep as early as 2.30." (This in reply to my suggestion that she might perhaps have had a dream, and that possibly she had fallen asleep as early as 2.30.)

When the trance was over, I explained to Mrs. Thompson why I had asked the question, and although she then knew that to bring about a very pretty coincidence she ought to have been asleep by 2.30, she wrote me the same evening to the effect that on further consideration she felt sure that she had not gone to sleep before 3 o'clock.

During the trance, and immediately after the statement about the coughing and the "Monro box," (see p. 203), Nelly said:—

"Where's Millie? Mr. Myers' Millie? Millie Rawson? She knows all about me, because she says I went to her house the other day."

*J. G. P.*:—"What day?"

*Nelly*:—"Don't remember."

*J. G. P.*:—"Where is she?"

*Nelly*:—"I don't know. She has got a very ill mother."

*J. G. P.*:—"Do you remember going to her house?"

*Nelly*:—"Yes."

*J. G. P.*:—"What do you remember?"

*Nelly*:—"It was like this. She said 'Come along, Nelly, and tell me all about it.' She invited me to go to see her. She has got a very ill mother. She isn't dead; don't think she's dead—don't think that. She only thought it: that's as good as an invitation. Tell her I'll go and see her for Mr. Myers' sake, not for her's. I went, but it was a muddled went. I wish you believed me."

*J. G. P.*:—"Why?"

*Nelly*:—"Because I once said I wouldn't go to any one but Mother: but I did this time to oblige Mr. Myers. You know the old lady was lying down at the time. . . . Yet Mrs. Evie seemed to be there. Don't think I mean Mrs. Myers. I mean the one (then follows a personal description). It was the day they forgot to send the turkey."

*J. G. P.*:—"Who is 'they'?"

*Nelly*:—"Mother knows about it. Don't put down about the turkey: Mother won't like it. I'll think of something else to remember the day by."

*J. G. P.*:—"No, the turkey will do very well."

*Nelly*:—"Now, I'm happy; I've told you all the secrets that were on my mind."

Then towards the end of the sitting Nelly recurred to the subject again as follows:—"I did go to Millie Rawson. Yes, I did. She seems to be abroad. Mrs. Rawson isn't in that same bed that she used to be. Miss Rawson likes to talk to Mr. Myers, and rap the table at him. Not at him, with him. She always says I have light hair. Elsie has light hair, and I have got dark and curly hair. That's the truth."

The following is a copy of an extract from the notes taken at the sitting of December 22nd, 1900, with Miss Rawson:—

"Mrs. Thompson came with great difficulty at 2.40 p.m. (Paris time). 'I have come as you asked me.'"

Nelly fixed the date of her visit to Miss Rawson by saying that it was "the day they forgot to send the turkey." I have in my possession a statement signed by a lady and gentleman who were staying with Mrs. Thompson at the time, and also a statement signed by Mrs. Thompson's cook to the effect that the "day they forgot to send the turkey" was Saturday, December 22nd.

There was therefore a coincidence in the dates. There is also a suggestive resemblance between Nelly's words: "I went, but it was a muddled went"; "tell her I'll go and see her for Mr. Myers' sake"; "I once said I wouldn't go to any one but Mother, but I did this time to oblige Mr. Myers"; and the independent descriptions of what occurred during Miss Rawson's trance, namely: "She came only for a minute and feebly," and "Mrs. Thompson came with great difficulty," and the words spoken by the *soi-disant* Mrs. Thompson, "I have come as you asked me."

On the other hand Nelly says she controlled Miss Rawson, whereas Miss Rawson is supposed to have been controlled by Mrs. Thompson. Nelly says the lady whom she called "Mrs. Evie" was present, which was true, but though I did not actually know it to have been the case, I might have surmised it from something in Mr. Myers' letter to me. She seems to imply that Mr. Myers was present, which I knew, but she says Mrs. Rawson was present, when in reality Mrs. Rawson was dead, and I had known she was dead, though at the time of the sitting I did not feel sufficiently sure on the point to contradict Nelly when she told me not to think that Mrs. Rawson was dead; Nelly's words seem to imply—what proved to be the case—that Mrs. Myers was not present, a point on which I had no information. Two other sitters who were present at Miss Rawson's sitting, and of whose participation in the sitting I was unaware, Nelly did not mention.

The death of Mr. Myers, which took place less than four weeks after the sitting, prevented me from learning from the most authoritative source whether he had given Mrs. Thompson

any reason to suppose that somewhere about December 22nd he would have a sitting with Miss Rawson, and whether he had expressed to Mrs. Thompson a wish to try for correspondences between her and Miss Rawson's trance utterances.

In October, 1903, Mrs. Thompson was kind enough to let me examine all the letters written to her by Mr. Myers during the year 1900, and up to date of his death, and in none of these letters is there any reference to Miss Rawson, or to his having met her, or to his having had sittings with her, or to his having any prospect of having sittings with her. Naturally I did not give Mrs. Thompson the remotest hint of my reasons for wishing to examine the letters written to her by Mr. Myers during a certain period. Her ready acquiescence is only one more proof of her good nature and intelligent appreciation of the need for strict methods of inquiry.

After I had read through the correspondence, and explained matters to her, she assured me that she had no recollection of Mr. Myers having ever told her either that he had had sittings, or was hoping to have sittings about December 1900, or at any time with Miss Rawson. I learn further, from a good source, that Miss Rawson was not expecting to meet Mr. Myers in the South of France. (See also p. 302.)

But these peregrinations do not always have such interesting results. Of two that I am now going to relate one was abortive and the other inconclusive.

At a sitting held on December 20th, 1900, Nelly said:—

“Tell Dr. Hodgson I know all about that Mrs. Piper thing that he sent to my mother. I went to Mrs. Piper's house with the impression of that. And somebody in Mrs. Piper's house they said—‘Well, talk through Mrs. Piper.’ I didn't really talk through her, but Elsie to please me pretended to be me. I didn't talk to her because I'd promised Mother never to talk through any one but her. Elsie said:—‘Here's Mrs. Thompson's Nelly come.’ You see, Mrs. Benson, Elsie and I are regular little cheats. We're not really cheats, only we cheated that time. It wasn't really me. Elsie went and said that, and Mrs. Piper thought it was me. We're very much alike.”

What Nelly calls “that Piper thing” was not really a “Piper thing” at all, but an object, about which Dr. Hodgson

knew nothing, sent over by him to Mr. Myers for the purpose of an experiment with Mrs. Thompson. Nelly, in spite of her claim, has failed to give any correct information about this object.

Dr. Hodgson says that there is no trace in the records of Mrs. Piper's sittings of any such incident as Nelly describes. Perhaps Elsie told Nelly a tarradiddle; an impious suggestion to make about a spirit, but if spirits can cheat, there is no saying what crimes they mayn't commit.

The next instance is non-evidential, but I quote it because it forms one of the series under discussion, and, in order to form a proper estimate of the value of these particular phenomena, all must be taken into account, and also in order to illustrate the "automatic romance," as Miss Bramston calls it, of the trance.

Nelly opened the sitting of January 11th, 1901, in this way:—

"Mr. Piddington, will you buy me a white rabbit? No, not a white rabbit, because it would get dirty: a not-white rabbit to put on that mantelpiece. You can get one at the sweet shop at the corner of Sloane Street."

*J. G. P.*:—"What were you doing in Sloane Street, Nelly?"

*Nelly*:—"I went there to go to your house and try to find something out about your house. But I didn't get there. I stopped and looked at the rabbits in the shop."

There were rabbits in the window of a sweet shop at the corner of Sloane Street at this time and have been ever since, at least up to July 1903, and the chances are that there were for a long time before the date of this sitting, as this shop seems to make a speciality of toy rabbits. We are therefore at liberty to assume that at some time or other Mrs. Thompson had noticed the rabbits. But the point to which I want to draw attention is the extremely happy touch with which this little episode is treated. All the other voyages of discovery lead, or were represented as leading, to some definite result. This one is frustrated. The attractions of a sweet shop proved too much for Nelly, and science was deprived perhaps of some addition to the store of evidence for the existence of supernormal faculty in consequence. The whole thing is so artistically done, the episode lightly introduced and as lightly

dropped. It fits in properly as one of a series of similar excursions, and at the same time delightfully exemplifies the vividness and artlessness of the child-control.

This by-play, which abounds in the trance utterances of Mrs. Thompson, produces on me at the time a most vivid impression of the reality of the Nelly control: an effect which, however much weakened by subsequent reflection, is never entirely dissipated. I dare say as narrated in black and white the things read commonplace enough; but they are not in the least commonplace as they issue from the lips of the medium, when the spontaneity with which they are uttered is surprising.

(8) IGNORANCE DISPLAYED BY THE TRANCE-PERSONALITY OF  
MATTERS WHICH WERE OR MIGHT HAVE BEEN WITHIN  
THE COGNIZANCE OF THE MEDIUM.

In every single instance it stands to reason that the ignorance displayed by the trance-personality may have been mere pretence, assumed to create effect; but believing, as I do, that the phenomena of Mrs. Thompson's trance are genuine, I regard them as evidence of discontinuity of memory between Nelly and Mrs. Thompson, and as such worthy of record and study.

At the same time it seems to me possible that in some cases the ignorance is assumed by the trance-personality either from a kind of intellectual tic, or from playfulness, or from a lazy liking for sticking to an appellation when once used, or from an instinct for referring to people by nicknames.

*Sitting of October 28th, 1899.*

At this sitting I handed to Mrs. Thompson a cigar-cutter, the cover or holder of which was made of gun-metal. Mr. Feilding who was taking notes refers to it in them as a pencil; but he was sitting at some distance from the medium and so did not get a close view of it. The medium, however, had it in her hands for some time, and Nelly throughout spoke of it also as a pencil. For any one who was handling

and at the same time able to see it at close quarters, would have been difficult to mistake it for a pencil. At the same sitting Nelly referred to Mr. Podmore in a general way. Mr. Feilding then asked Nelly if she could say what Mr. Podmore was doing yesterday. Nelly answered:—“I see him in a big sort of bank, selling money.” Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Podmore live not far apart, and had Nelly named his real occupation, her statement would have had no evidential value. Whether at this time Mrs. Thompson knew Mr. Podmore's profession or not I cannot say; but I should think that she probably did; and if she did not, it is hard to understand why, if she is a fraud, she should have hesitated making a shot at it when with very little trouble she could have got certain information.

*Sitting of November 29th, 1899.*

Towards the end of this sitting Nelly said to Dr. van der Ploeg:—“I promise faithfully to give you plenty of details on Friday.” (Before the trance Mrs. Thompson had arranged to give a second sitting on the following Friday. Note the matter-of-fact way in which Nelly as usual assumes acquaintance with Mrs. Thompson's affairs.) Then turning to me she said:—“Don't let your mother or lady at your house be present at the sitting. It would make Mother nervous.”

I think the probabilities are that at this period Mrs. Thompson knew that “the lady at my house” was not my mother, but my wife: but whether that was so or not, Nelly, long after my wife had made Mrs. Thompson's acquaintance, continued to refer to her either as “the lady in my surroundings” or as “the lady at your house,” or as “our little girl's mother,” or as “the lady with neuralgia in my surroundings,” or vaguely as “she,” or in fact by any circumlocution rather than as “your wife.” Only once, to the best of my belief, has she ever made use of a direct and natural designation in speaking of my wife.

Mrs. Verrall has described (see *Proceedings*, Part XLIV, 194) a similar though more complicated example of this evasive avoidance by Nelly of the obvious way of styling people; but in my case there is no reason to suppose that Nelly failed to put two and two together, and to recognise



"the lady at my house," etc. as my wife. In Mrs. Verrall's case it seems possible that when she spoke of "the Willgar gentleman" or of "Arthur," she failed to grasp that the person to whom these appellations referred was Mrs. Verrall's husband.

In Mrs. Benson's sittings Nelly spoke of Archbishop Benson to Mrs. Benson first as "your husband," later as "Mr. Bishop," or as "the old gentleman," or "the old gentleman with the spectacles." Not only up to a certain point where Mrs. Cartwright referred to him clearly as "the Archbishop" but afterwards Nelly seemed to be unaware of the title used by Mrs. Cartwright, and continued to use the same terms as before or others, such as "that old gentleman, Mr. Benson," or "Mr. Truro." Finally, to her great chagrin, Nelly discovered that "Mrs. Benson is in the peerage," and that "Mrs. Cartwright knows" who "the clergyman who wears the night-shirt over his clothes" is, and in a state of great agitation announces that she is not happy any more (*i.e.* because when facts given in the trance are to be found also in works of reference, their evidential value is lost or diminished), and that "it's no good any more." "Bishop—Bishop—the Bishop who preached at St. Paul's Cathedral, Bishop Canterbury. I never knew before; Mrs. Cartwright says it's in the book." (*i.e.* in the peerage).

Even then she did not use the word "Archbishop," but "Bishop Canterbury"; and though Mrs. Benson had two more sittings after Nelly announced her discovery of the Archbishop's identity, she never referred to him by his proper title, but always by one of the circumlocutions with which she had grown familiar, or added new ones such as:—"that gentleman," "the Bishop gentleman," or "the sleeve gentleman."

I agree with Mrs. Verrall in thinking that the deliberate maintenance of these devices could serve no obvious purpose, and their only result would be, one would think, to confuse the medium, who, if she is fraudulent, must have quite enough to do to keep all the threads of her puppets from getting entangled, without introducing further and unnecessary complications into an already sufficiently complicated game.

*Sitting of February 6th, 1900.*

I handed to the medium at this sitting a double sheet of illuminated script done in the manner of the 14th and 15th century. The text was in English and perfectly easy to read; yet Nelly said of it:—"It's all in foreign languages; nobody could read it." At a later sitting I handed a coin to the medium, saying as I did so:—"This belonged to my mother." "Ah! Yes," replied Nelly, "this is the lady connected with the German prayers." "Why will you say German?" I protested, "It's English." So then Nelly conceded the point, excusing her mistake on the plea that "It's written in Old English letters; that looks like German."

*Sitting of April 19th, 1900.*

There had been an interval of six weeks between this and the last sitting, and Nelly seemed to have forgotten who I was. Speaking about a locket which had been handed to her by Dr. Max Dessoir she casually asked:—"What is that round the neck, Mr. Myers?" "I'm not Mr. Myers," I objected, to be met with the retort:—"I like Mr. Myers ever so much better than you, but Mother doesn't. How do you explain that?"

But in spite of my reminder she almost immediately showed again that she failed to remember me; so I tried to recall myself to her memory, and this time with success, for Nelly greeted me with the remark:—"Oh! yes; you're the one with Dorothy"; a mark of recognition not perhaps flattering, but quite conclusive; for at my first sitting Nelly had said that she got "an influence connected with the lady at your house called Dorothy." In spite of my denial of there being any person so named connected with my wife, Nelly stuck to her statement, and the next day I discovered that the name of a hospital nurse who had come to attend my wife the day before the sitting was Dorothy. That the name was not a mere random shot was shown by subsequent and more precise statements made by Nelly about Dorothy. (See pp. 214-220.)

If Mrs. Thompson's trances are fraudulent, I do not see what was to be gained by pretending that she did not recognise me; nor can I think that it was a momentary slip of memory

due to her greater familiarity with Mr. Myers as a sitter or recorder, for the mistake was made twice, and I should imagine that it was of primary importance to a fraudulent medium to fix well in her mind the identity of her sitters: whereas the same circumspection need not be so essential to a secondary personality or a spirit.

Nelly always referred to the screen used to hide the sitters during a certain number of sittings as "the umbrella"; but this I fancy was meant as a term of reproach, and was only one of "Fanny's little ways."

A much more curious point is that for a short time after his death Nelly denied with obstinacy that Mr. Myers was dead; though the fact was of course known to Mrs. Thompson, and although the Sidgwick control was represented as perfectly cognisant of it.

(9) AN INCIDENT ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE GRADUAL EMERGENCE  
OF FACTS IN THE TRANCE-UTTERANCES.

My first sitting with Mrs. Thompson was, as I have said, on October 28th, 1899, when I went to her house under an assumed name with Mr. Feilding.

I was addressed by Nelly in the course of the sitting by my real name; but I was not and am not satisfied that Mrs. Thompson might not have been able (for reasons into which I need not enter) to make a very good guess as to who I was without the aid of her "enlarged consciousness." I also think that a good deal of what was told me at this sitting was nothing more than amplifications of, or inferences from, the "Noel Walker" crystal-message. (See above, pp. 112-119.)

But this sitting contained one item of information which was afterwards in later sittings more fully developed: and this I find it impossible to consider as deduced from the crystal-message, and its possession by Mrs. Thompson can best be accounted for by supposing that it reached her through some supernatural channel.

While the medium was holding in her hands a match-box of mine, and also a cap and tie that had belonged to a deceased friend of Mr. Feilding's, Nelly said:—"I get an influence, connected with the lady at your house, called Dorothy. Dorothy also comes with the tie." Towards the end of the sitting the medium took hold of the cap and tie again, and Nelly said:—

"There is a Dorothy or a William in connection with them. I can't attach the cap to either Mr. Feilding or to you. It seems as if given by somebody else."

I told Nelly at the same time that the name Dorothy had no meaning either for me or for the lady at my house; and as the name Dorothy was also said to be connected with the cap and tie which had nothing whatever to do with me, I took it to be merely a name shot out at random like others at the same sitting.

As a matter of fact, however, the evening before this sitting took place a hospital-nurse named Sister Dorothy had come to attend upon my wife. My supraliminal memory was certainly not in possession of the nurse's name, though perhaps my subliminal memory was, as on reflection I felt almost sure that the doctor, who had engaged the nurse for me, had some days previously spoken of her to me as "Sister Dorothy."

It was not till the morning after the sitting when I was going through the notes that it occurred to me to enquire what the nurse's name was. I think I should not have troubled to bother about the name had not Nelly, when I told her at the sitting that she was mistaken about Dorothy, insisted that she was right. This struck me as curious, and as not the kind of tactics that a fishing trance-personality would have pursued in face of my denial. Having then discovered that there was a Dorothy connected with my wife, I waited in the hope of getting some further reference to her.

The next sitting which I attended was on November 29th, 1899. No mention was made of Dorothy; but this was natural enough, because the communications were addressed chiefly to a new sitter, Dr. van Eeden, and were not concerned with me in any way.

Two days later Dr. van Eeden had a second sitting. It was held at my house for the first time, and this seems to

have reminded Nelly of Dorothy; for just before the trance ended she said to me:—

“Have you got a Dorothy in this house? Some one is calling Do-ro-thy. A live lady is calling Dorothy. She wasn’t a foreigner—an ordinary lady—a very musical voice calling Dorothy. Dorothy would be a good medium for physical phenomena. Peter could do knocks through her.”

At this date the nurse was no longer at my house. I can trace no meaning in the musical voice calling “Do-ro-thy”; my wife always called her “Nurse” *tout court*.

The next sitting at which I was present was on December 18th, 1899. Towards the close of it I asked Nelly for more news about Dorothy.

Nelly was annoyed and testily replied:—

“Oh, don’t bother me about Dorothy. She’s a very unimportant person; only a kind of servant.”

“Well,” I said, “if she is so unimportant, why did you get a message about her?”

“Because,” answered Nelly, without the least hesitation, “because she has a little dead brother, who wanted to send a message. We call him Bob—Bobby. He’s got something wrong with him in the neck and ear, and it made his head a little bit sideways.”

I wrote to Sister Dorothy to enquire if there were any truth in this statement. Her reply was to this effect: that she had no dead brother named Bobby, but she remembers a little boy in her hospital of that name, rather a pet of hers, who had a diseased bone in his neck. The neck was kept between sandbags, and this in time made his ears sore.

The identification is not of course entirely satisfactory, because Nelly described Bobby as Sister Dorothy’s dead brother. But Nelly has at various times explained that she has to guess at relationships. She seems to be roughly cognisant of the *relations* existing between two individuals, and from such general impressions to infer the *relationship*. But, granting for a moment Nelly’s account to be the true one, it would be easy to account for the error in question.

Let us suppose that a little spirit-child, Bobby, was cognisant of Sister Dorothy’s presence in my house. He tells Nelly during the séance on November 29: “A lady con-

ected with that gentleman has got Sister Dorothy at her ouse." Nelly repeats this information in a parrot-like way: misunderstands the use of the term "Sister," and imagines at because Bobby talks of "Sister Dorothy" Bobby must e Dorothy's brother.

The next sitting was held on January 5th, 1900, and uring the séance proper no reference was made to Dorothy. fter the trance was over, and while Mrs. Thompson as having tea with my wife and myself, she unexpectedly elapsed into trance, and Nelly began to chatter away about atters quite unconnected with those dealt with at the egular sitting. I took the opportunity to ask for something arther about Dorothy. Nelly said:—"She has left that ituation and gone to another one. It is a place where here are four children." [See below.]

Nelly was most disdainful about my interest in Dorothy n this occasion, too: she evidently thought that one ought o be inquisitive only about one's deceased great-grandmother: n attitude all the more curious because she usually has the nstincts of the true psychical researcher well developed, and isplays a keen grasp of what is good evidence and what s not.

At the next sitting, which was on January 10th, 1900, he had evidently made up her mind to nip any tiresome nquiries in the bud, for, without my making any reference o the distasteful subject, she said:—"Don't ask me about orothy." But, undismayed by her aversion, I ventured to oint out to her the importance of obtaining more informa- ion about Bobby and Dorothy, and urged her to try to nd Bobby in order to learn more about him. This she romised to do, though with a bad grace, and I fear she id not pursue her mission *con amore*.

Nothing was said about Dorothy at the next sitting on anuary 12th, 1900, nor at the two subsequent meetings. n January 23rd, 1900, I was not present at the séance ntil just at the end, when I again brought forward the subject with the words:—"Will you give me more things bout Dorothy?" "Dorothy," said Nelly, "looks rather like , hospital nurse. She has a bonnet with white lace on it. She is now at a house where some one is speaking French."

I wrote to Sister Dorothy, and she replied:—"I think most of the people I've been with can" [*i.e.* speak French]. "I do not possess any bonnet with lace on it."

She wears, however, a hospital-nurse's cap with long white strings. I imagine that the uniform of no hospital-nurse includes a bonnet trimmed with lace, white or of any other colour, and it is curious that this unlikely detail of dress should have been assigned to Sister Dorothy just after her profession had been rightly named: curious, because not only has Mrs. Thompson a most observant eye for dress, but Nelly also shares her interest in frocks and frills.

Nothing further is directly stated of Dorothy, but after a lapse of nearly two months she is referred to indirectly again. As I have already described (see p. 213) Nelly failed to recognise me at the sitting held on April 19th, 1900; and so I had to try to recall myself to her memory. In this I was successful, for, when I had finished my explanations as to who I was, Nelly said in an off-hand way:—"Oh! yes: you're the one with Dorothy." I had flattered myself that I had other claims on Nelly's recollection than this, but apparently I had not, for the time at least. Nelly can be uncompromisingly frank.

Later on in the same sitting, which was for the special benefit of Dr. Max Dessoir, Nelly began to speak about my mother, and to give me messages from her. Among other things my mother was represented as sending her love to "a particular young man belonging to you named Paul." I was bidden to tell Paul that he would be better. I thereupon said to Nelly:—"Ask my mother who Paul is"; for the name Paul had no meaning for me. Nelly replied:—"Your own special friend. He has got a sister named Marie, and that Dorothy seems to belong to that Paul."

I think that during the progress of the sitting I had no glimmering who Paul might be, but on reading over my notes, I saw at once that all the references to "Paul" would become at once intelligible if applied to my wife; in spite of the fact that "Paul" is spoken of throughout in the masculine gender, I have not the least doubt that my wife, whose name is Pauline (her name must have been known to Mrs. Thompson), was intended. Some ten days later Mr.

vers sent me a message from Nelly to say that "Paul is lady, a friend of Mr. Piddington's, and she belongs to the y that had the prayers that looked like German writing": to my mother.

Dorothy, therefore, is linked in the mind of the trance-sonality with my wife and myself six months after the t casual reference to her; although as far as we were con- nected she would have passed out of our minds when her rt visit was ended.

It would be difficult to find a better illustration of the ing out of details in trance-utterance. Mrs. Benson's ings provided some good examples of this gradual leakage, t in that case the details which emerged were known to e sitter, whereas in this case some of them were not.

I must be supposed to have known the name of the nurse, d I knew that Dorothy was "only a kind of servant"; d I had known all along, even when I didn't consciously ow her name, that a hospital-nurse was at my house. Yet is last point—the one thing that I had known from the ginning—was the very last item of information to emerge.

Nelly's knowledge was acquired telepathically from me, is to be noted that it took close on two months before e succeeded in tapping my brains of this the most aterial fact in the series of statements. But the telepathic pthesis has to be strained considerably before it will ver all the difficulties in this case. For one thing, unless e supposes that throughout the medium was tapping the ain of Sister Dorothy, whom she had never seen, never d see, and within whose vicinity she, to the best of my lief, never came—unless, I say, one resorts to such a ained hypothesis as that—one is obliged to assume that e medium drew her facts first from one source, and then om another. I knew nothing about Bobby, and nothing of e nurse's movements after she left my house; these facts ust therefore be supposed to have been derived from the rse. Yet Nelly, who is ready enough at all times to hunteer the statement that she is "getting things out of ople's stomachs"—which is her definition of the telepathic ory—would not offer that explanation here. The source her information she maintained was a spirit-boy, who had



apparently dropped in as it were at a sitting, attracted thereto by the presence of some one at whose house his "Sister Dorothy" was staying.

A remarkable point, too, is Nelly's apparent holding over of knowledge within her possession. Thus at my first sitting the name Dorothy only is given. Yet, when three weeks later I asked her to explain what had led to her mention of Dorothy, her answer gives the impression that all along she had known about Bobby, and that Dorothy was "only a kind of servant," but had suppressed these details because she thought they were of no interest.

Very curious also is the casual way in which knowledge of Sister Dorothy's movements is indicated. On January 5th, 1900, Nelly says: "She has left that situation and gone to another one. It is a place where there are four children."

The use of the term, "that situation," seems to imply that she knew that she had already not only left my house but also been to another house since, and left that as well. This was really the case, though I did not know it. In the house where Sister Dorothy was on January 5th, there were six, not four, children. It was not till a week later that she went to a house where there were four children. It is conceivable that on January 5th Sister Dorothy knew, or some one knew, that she was to go to a family where there were four children; but this point I have not been able to clear up, as, just when I was about to make enquiries, the nurse went out to South Africa in March, 1900, and I have since lost sight of her.

Again, on January 23rd, 1900, Nelly said:—"She is now at a house where someone is speaking French." If this is taken to mean, as I think it fairly may be, that she had then made still another move since January 5th, the fact was true, though the statement about some one speaking French has not been verified.

Altogether the incident is a most complicated and perplexing one: hard to account for in my view by telepathy alone. The way in which the details dribbled out suggests the haphazard interchange of information between intelligences like ourselves rather than the successful ferreting out of facts by means of the purposeful exercise of a telepathic faculty.

## (10) NELLY'S ASSOCIATIONS OF IDEAS.

An interesting feature of Mrs. Thompson's trance-phenomena is the way in which proper names come out. Punning associations of ideas seem to help Nelly on to the right track more than anything else. Mrs. Verrall has given one instance of what I mean in her paper published in *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., p. 208. I quote the passage:—

Merrifield was said to be the name of a lady in my family. The name was given at first thus: 'Merrifield, Merriman, Merryght, Merrifield.' . . . Later Nelly said:—'Mrs. Merryght, that's not quite right; it's like the name of a garden'; after in vain trying to give me the name exactly, she said:—'I will tell you how names come to us. It's like a picture; I see school children enjoying themselves. You can't say Merryght, because that's not a name, nor Merrypeople.' Nelly, later spoke of my mother as 'Mrs. Happyfield,' or 'Mrs. Merrifield,' with indifference."

The real name was Merrifield, and it should be noted that the exact form of the name was given by Nelly at the very first attempt, but that in spite of this she appears not to have been aware of her success. She knew apparently that she had got somewhere near the mark, but not that she had hit the bull's-eye.

A picture was presented to her which she recognised as containing a correct clue to the general type of name, but she was not confident that she had translated the symbolic picture with precise accuracy.

The sittings with which I am dealing in this paper afford several instances of a similar kind to the above, and in every instance this mental trick is exhibited exclusively by Nelly, and not at all by the other controls.

At a sitting held on February 1st, 1900, Nelly was trying to get the name of the deceased lady called in the record of 'Mr. Brown's' sittings Miss Clegg. The real name was a rare one,

Nelly never actually succeeded in getting it, though she actually got pretty near it. After making two attempts at

the name, she remarked :—" Funny the way I get names. I get an association with flowers or trees or places, or all kinds of things."

*J. G. P.* :—" How do you know when it's right ?"

*Nelly* :—" There's a feeling of *satisfaction* when the right association is found, which tells me it's right."

As an explanation this is not very illuminating, but it is interesting as exemplifying Nelly's ignorance of the processes by which she acquires information. I am sure that this ignorance is not assumed, as conceivably it might be in order to avoid interrogatories about the mechanism of the trance-communications which it might tax the ingenuity of the trance-personality to meet, and that whatever may be the pretensions of the other controls to understand the laws underlying the phenomena, Nelly at least does her work more or less blindly and automatically. More than this, I believe she regards the whole thing as a game or puzzle which it is good fun to solve. Nelly is no glum archangel ; she never displays any consciousness of being engaged on a serious mission, nor indulges in prayer, pious ejaculations, or sanctimonious discourse ; and is, in fact, a down-right, unsentimental, debonair being. She is prepared to play the game under what she considers the proper rules ; but if these are overstepped, as in the "screen sittings" (see p. 163), she protests and is inclined to sulk. But to return to the subject of her associations of ideas.

At Dr. van Eeden's first sitting no attempt was made to give his name. At the second sitting Nelly's first words were, "What was 'Vam'?" Then later on she made several unsuccessful attempts to pronounce the name, thus : "Was Vandén ? can't say it. Vandenen ? Begins like van in the street ; then enden. Begins with E—Endenen—not like Hendon, but Endenen."

Finally at the end of the sitting she gave the name clearly, though with the English pronunciation :—"Do you know van Eeden ?"

At the next sitting she seems pleased to have coined a little pun, by means of which she can be sure of fixing the strange name in her memory :—"I know your name is Mr. Bosom—Bostim. . . . You are Mr. Gardener Eden (or Garden of Eden)."

It is possible that there was more in this pun than meets the

eye, and that it was not simply an aid to memory, but was also intended to convey a new fact. Bosom and Bostim were evident attempts at Bussum, where Dr. van Eeden farms land; and Nelly may have meant that as Adam delved in the Garden of Eden, so did Dr. van Eeden at Bussum; or rather, perhaps, she had no definite intention of suggesting this, but the facts came to her in this allegorical fashion.

Dr. van Eeden's second sitting furnishes another very similar instance. Mrs. Thompson was holding some hair that belonged to a Dutch lady. Meanwhile Nelly, who had already given several relevant facts in connection with it, said:—"Do you know Linden? I associate the hair with 'Unter den Linden'—not with the place, but with the name Linden." Van Lynden is the surname of intimate friends of the husband of the lady to whom the hair belonged, though this was unknown to Dr. van Eeden at the time. But what I want to bring out now is not the relevancy of the name, but the practical illustration here furnished of Nelly's account of how she gets names by association with trees or places.

A critic whose acquaintance with Mrs. Thompson's trance phenomena was acquired solely through a perusal of the records might perhaps think that this disconnected way of shooting out names was more ingenious than ingenuous in that it gave the medium more than one chance of hitting the mark; for instance, in the case of the name Linden, had it not happened that the husband of the owner of the hair had friends of that name, pertinency might still have been claimed for it on the ground that the owner of the hair, or one of her family, had recently been staying in Berlin, or had some connection with one of the half-dozen places called Linden, or had an ancestor who had fought at the battle of Hohenlinden.

From the main contention that proper names, shot out at random, have a better chance of applicability than when connoted of some definite person or thing, no one would dissent; but if the records of the sittings should create the impression that either Mrs. Thompson fraudulently or the trance-personality deliberately throws out proper names disconnectedly for the purpose of "fishing," then the written records, as must often be the case, are misleading.

Mrs. Benson, who had a series of sittings with Mrs. Thompson, had her first sitting on December 18th, 1899. The surname Benson was mentioned for the first time on January 5th, 1900, in an entirely wrong connection, and when the sitter was a lady unknown to and unassociated with Mrs. Benson. On January 12th, 1900, when Dr. Tuckey was the sitter, Nelly began to speak about Mrs. Benson, and went on to say:—"There's a place in Birmingham where Mother often goes: it's Bensons Limited."

Again, at the close of one of Mr. "Wilson's" sittings on January 18th, 1900, when I asked if she had anything new to tell about "Martin," who had been mentioned at Mrs. Benson's first sitting, Nelly replied:—"The old lady like Bensons Limited. It's where Mother goes to have dinner—in Birmingham—in Cow Street—no, Bull Street. It's like Slater's." She did not, however, on either occasion explain that by means of that association of ideas she had either got hold of the name or retained it in her memory; nor did she on the occasion of Mrs. Benson's second sitting on January 23rd, 1900, when she apostrophised her in the following terms:—"My darling Mrs. Benson, I don't call you Limited." Here the mnemonic process is not drawn attention to, but can be readily traced. But again, as in the case of "Mr. Gardener Eden," the association of ideas may have recommended itself as specially appropriate because it put Nelly on the track of something besides the mere name of the sitter. There was a very definite connection between Mrs. Benson and Birmingham, for her husband, the late Archbishop, was a native of that town.

But there is another point of interest in connection with "Bensons Limited." Mrs. Benson's identity was supposed to be unknown to Mrs. Thompson both before and after the second sitting. On some date, however, between the second sitting and February 6th, 1900, Mrs. Crackanthorpe happened to mention to me quite casually, in the course of conversation, that Mrs. Thompson had told her that Mr. Benson was having some sittings. So when I next saw Mrs. Thompson on February 6th, 1900, I asked her before-~~hand~~ if she remembered the name of the lady with white hair who had sat with her twice recently. Mrs. Thompson

could not think of the name at once, but finally said "Mrs. Benson." I then asked how she had thought of the name, and she replied that she had recalled it by thinking of Bensons Limited, a Birmingham restaurant. I deal elsewhere (see pp. 271-3) with the question involved in Mrs. Thompson's knowledge of the name of one of the sitters supposed to be unknown to her, and now draw attention only to the employment of exactly the same association of ideas by Mrs. Thompson awake and Mrs. Thompson entranced. Bull Street, it will be noticed, was first called Cow Street; yet Slater's apparently presented no difficulty.

On February 1st, 1900, nine days after Mrs. Benson's second sitting, I had a sitting with Mrs. Thompson by myself. Before the sitting began Mrs. Thompson showed me an entry made in her diary under the date of January 31st, 1900, which ran as follows:—"Nelly says the lady with white hair [*i.e.* Mrs. Benson] has an old gentleman, the one with spectacles; and Grandpapa Middleton went to school with him." Then directly trance began Nelly said:—"You mean Mr. Bishop: the gentleman with the spectacles. That's why I told her to bring his spectacles. I traced that old gentleman back to school, and I found him talking to Grandpapa. He lived at (pause). You know Mrs. R——'s son. Mrs. R—— is Mother's next-door neighbour. Mrs. R——'s son has gone as physical science master to Marlborough. I hear Mrs. R—— telling Mother that. Then like that is the name of the place where Mr. Bishop lived. A Church School, a very high ecclesiastical school. Then I traced him to school. Grandfather Middleton was a smaller boy than Mr. Bishop. . . . Have you got King Edward VI.'s school?"

The special point which I want to bring out here is the reference to Marlborough. Nelly's "Mr. Bishop" is undoubtedly meant for Archbishop Benson. Dr. Benson was not connected with Marlborough, but he was Headmaster of Wellington; and the association between the names of the two greatest English soldiers is obvious, or at least it ought to be, though I must admit I failed to seize it until it was pointed out to me. Nelly did not say that the Archbishop lived at Marlborough, but "like that is the name of the place where" he lived.

The whole sequence of ideas in this passage is worth study. Nelly's discovery that her Grandfather had been at the same school as Mrs. Benson's husband starts her on the topic of school generally. She finds that the Archbishop's connection with school did not terminate with his school-days; and that he lived at another school. She can't quite get hold of the name of this other school, but recognises that a school of which she has heard, through her mother's next-door neighbour, contains a clue to the name.

It is passages of this kind which I think as much as anything else have convinced me of Mrs. Thompson's absolute *bona fides*. Until some evidence is forthcoming to show that an admittedly fraudulent medium can successfully reproduce a subtle mimicry of recognised subconscious processes, such as I believe we here see exemplified in Mrs. Thompson's trance, I shall prefer to consider that such reproduction is impracticable. One of the tasks which our Society has before it is to try to find another Davey who will mimic the trance-phenomena of Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Thompson. I am inclined to think that a large amount of success might be obtained by a clever impostor, in so far as the giving of correct facts about the sitter or the sitter's belongings was concerned, but what I greatly question is whether, while the impostor's attention was devoted to picking up hints from such indications as his sitter might afford, and dramatising these in appropriate fashion, he would not be too much preoccupied to introduce and maintain a consistent and convincing travesty of these characteristic traits of subconscious action.

At another of Mrs. Benson's sittings, on May 30th, 1900, another type of association of ideas was displayed.

Early in the sitting General Buller was mentioned; though the fact that he was known to Mrs. Benson was not actually stated. Later on the name of Mrs. Benson's dead son, Martin, which had already been frequently mentioned, was written; then Nelly said:—"I seem to get Sir George White—White." She then wrote "White" after the "Martin": or rather it should be said that "White" was written, for Nelly asserts that she is never responsible for any of the automatic writing (see pp. 231-2, 243). The significance of this was that the second name of Martin Benson was White.

Then a little later Nelly added:—"You know Mr. White—military man—far more anxious to convert you." The only apparent point in the allusion to "Mr. White—military man," lies in the fact that the only member of the Benson family who was ever connected with the army was Captain White Benson, after whom the late Archbishop and his son, Martin Benson, were named. It is true that this fact is stated in the Archbishop's *Life*, which had been published some months before this sitting took place, but I am not quoting the statements made by Nelly as indicative of supernormal knowledge, but as illustrations of the sequence of ideas characteristic of the Nelly control.

An instance almost exactly analogous to "Merrifield Merrymans Happyfield" occurred in another series of sittings attended by Mr. and Mrs. Percival. Their son was mentioned at their first sitting, and reference made to his school-fee, and to the fact of the school being situated at Oxford, but the actual name of the school was not mentioned. At their third sitting Nelly said:—"I know where Springfield is. I don't know what I'm saying. Yes, that's what I mean." And then later:—"Springfield, Oxford. Or is it Highfield? It's either Highfield or Springfield College, Oxford. It's the truth." The real name of the school was Summer Fields; and one can easily understand how a, so to speak, charade-picture, symbolising Summer Fields, might be wrongly interpreted as Springfield; though, unless the picture presented to Nelly were of a meadow on rising ground, it is not so easy to see why the name Highfield should have been guessed.

At a sitting at which I alone was present on February 14th, 1900, I handed to the medium several objects belonging to former sitters, and afterwards gave her some hair of my mother's, though without, so far as I am aware, allowing any indication to escape me that the object had any particular interest for me personally; all Mrs. Thompson could have normally known about the lock of hair was that it had been handed to her at a former sitting, and on that occasion too; it had been presented among other objects belonging to other people; and I may add that I had given Mrs. Thompson to understand that I should not "sit" for communications myself. After the hair I gave some illuminated script that had



been painted by my mother, and while the medium was handling this, Nelly said:—"You know Leo Myers. There's a Leo belonging to this lady." The only Leo that could be described as belonging to my mother is my own daughter, who is called Leo. Mrs. Thompson may have known that this was her name, though I doubt it, and it must be borne in mind that, to the best of my belief, I gave her no hint that I was personally interested in the illuminated script, while the character of other facts given by Nelly in connection with objects that had belonged to my mother must also be considered. (See pp. 122-5, 149-154.) Not one single thing of those which Mrs. Thompson *could* have got up about me, my family, and belongings did Nelly say; and what she did say I have not the least hesitation in asserting she *could not* at such short notice as the circumstances allowed,—or indeed, I firmly believe, under any ordinarily conceivable circumstances,—have learnt by normal methods of enquiry. But putting aside the question of whether the mention of the name Leo is of evidential worth, the way in which the name is led up to, by first of all mentioning another Leo known to Mrs. Thompson, and, if one may put it in that way, known through her to Nelly, is quite in keeping with what has been described above.

The same sitting, that of February 6th, furnished another instance of a like kind. Nelly said that a "Rev. John" had been a great friend of my mother's, and had done her some service for which she retained a grateful remembrance. I did not, when this was said, recognise any meaning in it, and I have not since been able to verify this statement; but hoping to get preciser details, I asked;—"What was the Rev. John's name?"

*Nelly*:—"It was Harper."

*J. G. P.*:—"How did you get the name?"

*Nelly*:—"It was like the picture of a man playing a harp, and as you can't say Harpist I say Harper."

Just before the reference to the Rev. John, Nelly had been speaking about a man whom she subsequently identified as my mother's brother, my uncle. She began by saying:—"About a relation of her's (*i.e.* of my mother's) that has been ill in a foreign country."

*J. G. P.* :—"When?"

*Nelly* :—"Some weeks before the snow came. A long way off—a gentleman not well—not *very* ill—not an ordinary country. You know 'Maid of Athens': that sort of country, not European, not on the Europe map; where they ride horses without saddles on. I don't mean just where the gentleman is, but near about: not South Africa. . . . It was a colony, not a foreign country. . . . Has he got sheep all round him? It's summer time, not winter. His name was Queensland."

My uncle does live in a colony, though the name of the colony is not Queensland. ("His name is Queensland" clearly meant that Queensland is the name of the place where he lives.) He lives in the Island of Mauritius, where, to the best of my information, it is not the custom to ride horses without saddles on, nor do sheep form a distinctive or common feature of the landscape. The order in which the various details about my uncle's alleged place of residence emerges is, in view of what has been said above about Nelly's associations of ideas, extremely suggestive; and I believe it is possible to trace the origin of the erroneous details. Three intelligences are supposed to be engaged in the communications: Nelly, Mrs. Cartwright, and my mother. When I say "are supposed" I do not mean that it is directly asserted, for the participation of Mrs. Cartwright and of my mother is rather to be inferred from internal evidence and by analogy with the "business" of the trance phenomena generally; but the impression created is that my mother is contributing facts which Mrs. Cartwright conveys and, when necessary, translates to Nelly.

Now, with regard to the statements about the country where my uncle lives, the first fact given is that he is "in a foreign country"; the foreign country is next said to be "a long way off," and "not an ordinary foreign country." Then follow the words:—" 'Maid of Athens,' that sort of country, not European, not on the Europe map": which I take to mean that, although Athens is in Europe, the country is not European, but Oriental in character, like Greece.

At this point, according to my surmise, the trance-personalities felt that it was desirable to arrive at a more precise

definition of the foreign country, and I conjecture that Mrs. Cartwright by means of a charade-picture tried to convey to Nelly the notion of a colony. If for this purpose she, so to speak, threw upon the screen a conventional picture of the English colonist in a flannel shirt, and wearing a slouch hat, and bestriding a bare-backed horse, the source of Nelly's next phrase—"where they ride horses without saddles on"—can be accounted for.

After these words come one or two sentences applicable to my uncle, but without bearing on the country where he lives. Then Nelly recurs to the subject again and says:—"It was a colony—not a foreign country"; again goes off to another topic, and finally says:—"Has he got sheep all round him? It's summer time not winter. His name was Queensland." I venture to suggest that what was true and what was false in these statements was derived from one and the same source, and that the error arose from misinterpretation of a symbolic picture, and not because the sources of information on which Nelly was drawing were unauthentic.

I conceive that Mrs. Cartwright realised when Nelly had said "where they ride horses without saddles on" that she had failed to grasp the intention of the picture which had been employed to represent a colonist, and had put too special a construction on it. So another attempt was made to convey to Nelly the notion of a colony: this time by some pictorial representation of a *land of the Queen's* beyond the seas. The attempt proved successful, and Nelly was enabled to give the correct information "It was a colony, not a foreign country." Then afterwards Nelly, not feeling perfectly satisfied with this, the correct interpretation, and combining what I imagine were the two separate pictures by which Mrs. Cartwright sought to impart the idea of the word "colony," hazarded another guess, and thus hit on the notion of Queensland and the sheep. The sheep may have been dragged in by a natural association of ideas when once the name Queensland was hit upon, or perhaps they were in the original picture of which the typical colonial squatter formed the prominent feature.

My language here has been particularly "anthropomorphic" but it must be understood that I describe what took place,

or what I imagine took place, in the trance in these objective terms merely as a matter of convenience and without prejudice. My attempt to trace some of the processes underlying the operations of the trance consciousness will no doubt appear to many rather fantastical. At any rate I have not tried to read preconceived theories into the facts; it is the facts themselves which have suggested to me the theories.

#### (11) THE AUTOMATIC WRITING.

At the first sitting which I had with Mrs. Thompson I saw one word written during the trance; it was not till more than two years later that I witnessed any automatic writing again. Then there was a good deal of it. One curious point about the script is that Nelly will not accept any responsibility for it. She has said so again and again, usually at the end of a sitting during informal chats; but twice she has put in a disclaimer in the regular course of a sitting.

Thus on January 3rd, 1901, the following occurred. Nelly said:—"You don't think Mr. Myers is so ill; he's much worse." "Yes," I replied, "but you wrote to the contrary." "I don't care what I've written," retorted Nelly; "don't put it down to me." I had as a matter of fact used a somewhat too strong expression, for nothing had been written which actually contradicted Nelly's statement; still that is not the point, but rather Nelly's readiness to hold cheap, or at least to accept no responsibility for, what the medium's hand writes.

This comes out more clearly in the next quotation, which is from the sitting of January 8th, 1901. "It's not me that writes. It's always somebody else that's writing. Not me, even if I tell you so." Nothing can be more definite than this; and the concluding words seem to suggest that Nelly herself is not always clear about the source of the automatic script.

The one word written at my first sitting with Mrs. Thompson was my own name, spelt backwards. During the whole of this sitting there was no suggestion that any one but Nelly was communicating. The name was written immediately after Nelly

had addressed me for the first time by my name. I had gone under an assumed name, and when my real name was uttered neither Mr. Feilding, who was present, nor myself gave any indication that the name spoken was right. If Nelly was not as she pretends, responsible for the writing, what part of Mrs. Thompson's consciousness, one may ask, was? And why, unless the phenomenon is genuine, should such a gratuitous complication be introduced as the pretence that the Nelly control has nothing to do with the automatic script?

A proper name was on one other occasion given backward though not written but spelt out. Nelly spelt it out, and when I asked her how she got the letters, she said that they had been given her by another spirit, who has occasionally controlled Mrs. Thompson.

The control whom I have previously referred to as Mr. D. wrote with great fluency, just as he spoke with great fluency. But there was nothing characteristic about his script; it was in Mrs. Thompson's ordinary handwriting. The Percival control also wrote; and though his script was generally almost indistinguishable from Mrs. Thompson's ordinary hand, it here and there showed traces of slight modifications—modifications which suggest an approximation to a half-formed school-boy type of hand. Yet there was no such similarity to the boy's own handwriting as to strike his parents, neither of whom can be said to err on the side of over-scepticism.

F. H. Percival, in common with another occasional control signs his messages in a different hand from that in which the body of the message is written. But in neither case does there appear to be any definite and unmistakable resemblance to the signatures of either, as either wrote it when living.

After the sitting of January 3rd, 1901, was over, and when Mrs. Thompson had been awake for some time and had been engaged in conversation with the sitter, Mrs. Percival, she went suddenly to the writing table, seized a pencil, and wrote very hurriedly a message which purported to come from the Percival control. The message in itself was not in the least evidential, but the writing differed from the previous Percival script in that the school-boy hand predominated over Mrs. Thompson's, and not *vice versa*, as in the script produced during trance. But it cannot be said that Mrs. Thompson's automatic

script presents any specially interesting features as a general rule. It is not the chief method of communication as in Mrs. Piper's case. Still to this rule there is one exception, and that a most important one.

I have referred parenthetically in the course of this paper to the existence of a control which purports to represent the late Professor Henry Sidgwick, whom Mrs. Thompson had met several times. This control communicated directly by the voice, but also by means of writing. The matter in neither case is of much evidential value; the manner both of speech and of writing is, however, of great interest.

I shall refer to the content of the communications only in so far as such reference may be necessary to elucidate points which will arise in connection with the script. It will doubtless be to many a disappointment that better evidential matter is not to be found in the communications of this control, from whom much might have been expected. But, on the assumption that the source of these communications is really what it is represented to be in the trance-messages, I am by no means sure that we ought to expect evidence of a specially effective character. A little reflection will show that a new problem has arisen in psychical research. A communicating spirit who has in life been a prominent member of our Society must find it a more difficult task to prove his identity through mediumistic utterance or writing than a layman, using "layman" in the sense of an individual who has not taken a conspicuous part in psychical or Spiritualistic work.

Mediums, and for that matter all who take any interest in our subjects, if they do not actually possess, must be assumed to possess, knowledge of the careers of deceased leaders of the psychical and spiritualistic movements. Since Mr. Myers' death, for instance, a stream of communications, which purport to emanate from him, has been pouring in from various sources. With two exceptions, I know of no series of messages which could not have been based upon common knowledge or upon information contained in obituary notices, or which could not be regarded as deduced from such knowledge, or which did not repeat facts given in his own writings or in the publications of the Society, or facts which could easily have been derived through con-

versation with some member of his large circle of friends or acquaintances.

Or again, if our President and Mrs. Verrall will forgive the liberty which I am taking, I can illustrate the new problem that we have to face in another way. Both Sir Oliver Lodge and Mrs. Verrall have contributed to the Society long papers on the phenomena of Mrs. Piper and of Mrs. Thompson, which contain a large number of details about their own personal affairs, about their family life, and about their relations, and not only their immediate relations, but also their remote or collateral kinsfolk. When their time comes—and long may it be deferred—to communicate from the other side, it is obvious that every message purporting to come from either of them which merely repeats facts already published in their own writings, or which can be shown to be based on these facts, will have to be discarded as evidentially worthless. And I say it in all seriousness—though the dictum sounds rather comic—extra patience will have to be accorded to the Psychical Researcher who is attempting to prove his identity. One can well imagine the annoyance and almost despair which might fall on such a communicator should he, after having succeeded in getting through a clear statement of fact, be met with the rejoinder from this side that his effort is of no avail, because what he has said has appeared, let us say, in the *Proceedings*.

Even during his lifetime a psychical researcher is not entirely exempt from the disadvantages resulting from the publication of his private affairs. Thus, for instance, Nelly has more than once referred to members of Mrs. Verrall's family, who have been mentioned in the *Journal* or *Proceedings*; not, however, making any pretence to have learnt of their existence in any supernormal way, but rather taking it for granted that I, of course, knew that these people were mentioned in our publications. In this way she spoke on several occasions of Mrs. Verrall's sister by her Christian name, *tout court*, and I hadn't the least notion whom she meant, and thought that the name was just thrown in hap-hazard. Many months passed before I discovered who was meant, and, when I mentioned my discovery to Nelly, her first anxiety *was* to warn me against attaching any importance to her

knowledge of the name: "Every one knows who Flora is," she remarked.

Recent phenomena obtained by Mrs. Verrall and others seem to suggest that the difficulties in the way of giving good proofs of identity are beginning to be recognised 'on the other side,' and that an attempt is being made to furnish evidence of intelligent discarnate action by the communication of concordant messages through different living persons.

But to return to the subject of the Sidgwick script. It will now be clear why I propose to devote myself exclusively to a description of the automatic writing, without taking into account the content of the script or of the spoken communications.

Professor Sidgwick died in the summer of 1900. I was to begin a new series of sittings with Mrs. Thompson towards the end of December, 1900. After consultation with Mr. Myers I decided to invite Professor Sidgwick's sister, Mrs. Benson, to a sitting with a view to attracting communications from her brother. She accordingly attended the first sitting of the new series on December 20th, 1900. This was also the second sitting at which a screen was interposed between the medium and the sitter, and the strangeness of the conditions was perhaps responsible for the poor results. Mrs. Benson brought with her to the sitting a paper-knife that had belonged to her brother, and two letters of his inside a covering gummed envelope. Only the vaguest references were made to the owner of these objects, and his identity was not discovered.

Three more sittings were held after this one, and yet not a word was said about Professor Sidgwick. At last, on January 11th, 1901 (see also pp. 297-8), the first reference was made quite unexpectedly at a sitting attended by Mr. and Mrs. Percival. Before the sitters entered the séance room, I asked Nelly to try to bring Edmund Gurney, as I wanted to have a talk with this control, which has occasionally manifested through Mrs. Thompson. Nelly said that I had better wait until the sitters were gone. A good deal of script was done at this sitting purporting to come from the Percival control. Across this script and intermingled with it were written in a different handwriting, though in a handwriting



showing no trace of resemblance to that of Professor Sidgwick the words "Trinity Henry Sidg." The first five letters seem like an attempt at "Trinity," and suggest that a reference was intended to Trinity College, Cambridge. On another page of the sheet of foolscap paper on which the automatic writing was being done, and underneath some of the Percival script and quite by itself and disconnected, was the word "paper-cutter." This was written I should say in Mrs. Thompson's natural hand, though it is a very scribbly sample of it. No paper-cutter had been presented to the medium at this sitting and it is therefore fair to conclude that the appearance on the same sheet of paper of an obvious attempt at the name "Henry Sidgwick" and of the word "paper-cutter" was not accidental.

In the course of the sitting I gave the medium a sealed envelope prepared by Mrs. Percival; whereupon Nelly said:—"I don't want any Henry Sidgwicks, because he said I want to tell about it." And then in reply to a question from me:—"What made me say Henry Sidgwick is because he's nearer to me than Mr. Gurney."

(Curiously enough, the very next moment the Percival control reappeared, and in his third sentence said:—"It was Mr. Gurney who took charge of me"; meaning, I have no doubt, that Mr. Gurney had helped him to come to communication. Cf. pp. 300-1.)

When the sitters had left I asked Nelly if Mr. Gurney was present. Nelly made the cryptic answer:—"About the trio." "Who are the trio?" I asked. "Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Gurney, and Mr. Myers," replied Nelly. "Henry Sidgwick is here." The Sidgwick control then made its first appearance, and, though the words spoken were few, the voice, manner and style of utterance were extraordinarily lifelike so much so indeed that, had I been ignorant of Professor Sidgwick's death and had happened to hear the voice without being able to tell whence it was issuing, I think I should have unhesitatingly ascribed it to him.

The next sitting was on January 21st, 1901, and direct trance came on and before the sitters entered the room Nelly began:—"Where's Henry Sidgwick? He's coming to talk after the sitting." As soon as the sitters left the



The last four words are plainly in Mrs. Thompson's handwriting. As to the rest of the writing Miss Alice (as Mrs. Thompson knew) had been Mrs. Sidgwick's secretary for many years, and therefore had every opportunity of becoming thoroughly familiar with Professor's handwriting, and whose cautious and critical temper was known to members of the Society, reports as follows:

"‘I don't think Myers is here’ is very like, ‘Myers is.’ Then it tails off."

It will be seen that the hand and the voice are expressing the same thought, though in slightly different language. The voice says, "He's not with me," the hand is writing, "I don't think Myers is here." This is an instance of this automatism within an automatism on the next sitting.

In order to make the allusions in the spoken and written communications intelligible, it should be explained that the sitting of January 21st, 1901, took place a few days after Mr. Myers' death, and (2) that "Alice" is intended to refer to Miss Alice Johnson. The interpretation of the remainder of the message is open to discussion. The words "You always thought me old and shabby, but I'm not now," may conceivably be an attempt to give the contents of a sealed envelope.

With the evidential side of the question, however, we are not here concerned; what I want to draw attention to first, is that this short specimen of the script was written in my eyes in an ordinary manner (except that the pen was held in an unusual and one would have thought unfashionable way), not deliberately nor with studied effort; and that the trance-personality is confident of having produced a successful imitation of the handwriting of Professor Sidgwick.

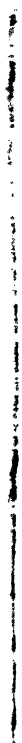
The morning after I received the script marked Mrs. Thompson, accompanied by the following note:—

"I am ashamed to say that I was not at home this morning but I promptly sat down and lost consciousness after a few minutes and wrote enclosed. It is rather a strange coincidence. I have never seen Prof. Sidgwick's, but I think it is very interesting (though perhaps not evidential) to compare it with the handwriting of Professor Sidgwick."

When the trance was over in the morning of Janu

Let me say  
how - like - love

~ let better age to much as I may know





(SCRIPT C.)

Now when I can give up they find my dream  
Find money and help  
As you and my  
Did you H. B. J. ask him when he comes here  
I read his letter to the Council

1901, I communicated to Mrs. Thompson the intention of the Sidgwick control to write through her hand when she was alone at home.

The script (marked B) reads as follows:—

"Late—late—late hour. Tell me why. Late—late hour. Late—late—late hour.

Myers is elsewhere, I think. Should I find him here, I will turn up the Thursday afternoon, and therefore you had better agree to meet, as I may have [undecipherable word] I think you probably find I have. Will you do for H. S. I go for must go till Thursday 31, ½ to 5. H. S. Certainly go for F. W. H. Myers, and may [?] tell you about me. Trevelyan's transferred."

Then followed in Mrs. Thompson's ordinary handwriting:—  
"Yes, yes. I want to know what Fred told you to remember."

The last sentence I am disposed to attribute not to the Sidgwick control, but to the control called in this paper Mr. D."

With regard to this script Miss Johnson comments:—

"As to the writing done after the sitting by Mrs. Thompson alone: I think there can be no doubt that the resemblance not accidental . . . and the words that are most like his [Professor Sidgwick's] writing are more like it than any [script A]. The first 'Thursday,' 'had better agree,' 'probably,' 'H. S.,' 'certainly' and 'Trevelyan,' seem to me most exactly as he would have written them. Almost the whole from 'Myers is elsewhere' to 'Trevelyan's transferred' wonderfully like."

The next sitting was on January 29th, 1901. I had gone out of the room for a few minutes in order to tell the sisters to go away, as Mrs. Thompson thought she would not go into trance a second time. On my return I found her tranced, and on the point of completing the following sentences (*v.* script marked C):—

"I am sure I can give if they find my diary. Fred knows and helps. H. S. Yes, but why did you H. Sidgwick tell Myers he isn't here. I read his letter to the Council." I have given the words as they appear in the script, but judged from the variations in the pencilling the signature "H. Sidgwick" really came after "my diary." "Why did you tell



Myers he isn't here?" obviously means "Why did you say Myers isn't here?", Nelly having several times declared her conviction that Mr. Myers was not really dead.

On the completion of the automatic writing Nelly said:—

"Mr. Sidgwick has been writing. He was talking to me and writing at the same time, and said, 'Why did you keep on saying Myers isn't here?' and he couldn't help writing it. [For a somewhat similar phenomenon, v. *Proceedings*, XXXIII., pp. 420-1.] Then he said, 'I read the letter to the Council, and everybody thought "Good" (or "Great") Heavens! Myers writing and Sidgwick reading . . .' (Here I failed to catch the remainder of the sentence, and suggested a paraphrase, which, however, Nelly did not accept.) No. He sort of said, 'Humph! but I read the letter straight off to the Council.' He said it was a letter from the abroad country, and my mother was abroad too, so she couldn't know about it. How many struggled to read it first? Then he read it quite well. He wants to tell you it's outside the possibility of Mother knowing. . . ."

The incident here referred to really took place as described, but I have to repeat that this is not the occasion to discuss the evidential value of the communications. The point to notice is, first, this the second instance of an automatism within an automatism, "But why did you tell Myers he isn't here?" and, secondly, Nelly's amplification, and correct amplification, of the episode only outlined in the script, namely, the reading of the letter at the Council (cf. p. 246).

On January 30th, 1901, the day after this sitting, Mrs. Thompson was at home engaged in writing a letter to a friend. But I had better quote her own account contained in a letter addressed to me the same day:—

"I sat down to write a letter to a friend. The table was strewn with papers, etc., and I suppose I went into trance. Anyway I was alone, and as the writing is muddled up with the letter, I thought it would be best to send you my letter just as I found it when I awoke."

The letter which Mrs. Thompson enclosed broke off in the middle of the second page in the middle of a sentence. There came a scrawl in ink, and below the scrawl the word "Pencil" written in ink. The script proper written in pencil then begins and runs as follows (see script D.):—

Sunday

we all were

✓

Traveling

1975

at

12

Myers North

2

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"May I come? Trevelyan's Trevelyhans [sic], 1.30, May 7th  
r perhaps "the"], /75 H.S. S. [or J.] [?] change letter [or  
etter"] to Miss J.

"Myers North must be here again on Thursday."

[Here was a line drawn from page two to page three of the  
set of note-paper, as if to show the sequence in which the  
naining part of the writing was to be read.]

"He will not now change, may be opening, am inclined to  
y so."

Then came two signatures. The first that of H. Sidgwick (?),  
e second that of F. W. H. Myers.

In the first signature the initial letters H. S. are clearly and  
ldly formed, but they are followed by a cramped and un-  
cipherable scribble. This scribble may possibly be an unsuc-  
ssful attempt to write the last seven letters of the name  
idgwick, but I think they represent an attempt at the initials  
F. W. H. M.," and that the Sidgwick signature is confined, as  
1 some other instances in the script, to the initials H. S. The  
econd signature, "F. W. H. Myers," appears underneath the first  
nd right in the extreme right-hand corner of the paper in an  
ntirely different handwriting. It is badly and weakly written,  
nd would not, I imagine, be considered a good imitation of Mr.  
Myers' ordinary signature; but it is extraordinarily like some  
pecimens of Mr. Myers' signatures as he wrote them in the last  
ew weeks of his life. I have unfortunately destroyed the letters  
hich I received from Mr. Myers during the period of his last  
lness, but I have a most clear and vivid recollection of the  
creasing deterioration in his handwriting, and particularly in  
e signature.

Above the sentence beginning "He will not now change" was  
ritten the following:—

"Myers says certainly go Myers says better go go out of  
wn not now not now the day not here."

This ends the Sidgwick script. Mrs. Verrall had a sitting  
e day after this last specimen was written, but though  
elly gave messages from Professor Sidgwick and conveyed  
planations from him about the last piece of automatic script,  
neither directly spoke nor wrote.

Miss Alice Johnson's estimate of the resemblance of the  
ript to Professor Sidgwick's handwriting has already been

quoted. Mrs. Sidgwick, in a letter addressed to Sir Oliver Lodge, speaks of "the unmistakable likeness of the handwriting"; and Mrs. Benson in a letter addressed to me after examining the various sheets containing the script, says of them:—"The more I look at them, the more I am struck with the likeness."

I showed specimens of the script to one or two people who were well acquainted with Professor Sidgwick's handwriting, without of course giving any hint of what answer I was expecting, and asked them to cast just a cursory glance at them, and then say whose handwriting it was. In each case the answer came without hesitation, to the effect that it was Professor Sidgwick's writing. I give reproductions of specimens of his pencil writing (taken from a book of rough notes on many different subjects, and marked 1, 2, 3, 4), also some reproductions of his signature, taken from letters, in order that the reader may compare the automatic script with them. As evidence for identity the script, remarkable though it is, seems to me worth little or nothing. I am not much of a dreamer, and at best am not a vivid one, and I am about as poor a visualiser as could be found, yet in my dreams I have more than once dreamt that I have received letters from a friend or acquaintance, and in the dream-letter the characteristic handwriting of my dream-correspondent has been depicted to the life. If so poor a visualiser as myself can in sleep summon up so clear a picture of another's handwriting, it is reasonable to suppose that Mrs. Thompson in trance enjoys at least an equal capacity, and there seems to me to be but a small step between such capacity for visualisation and the power of making a graphic reproduction of the visual image.

It is true that Mrs. Thompson says that she has never seen Professor Sidgwick's handwriting; and I entirely accept that statement if it is taken to mean (and Mrs. Thompson I should say, meant no more than this by it) that she has no conscious recollection of having seen it. But it is possible that either at Mr. Myers' house, or at some other house in Cambridge, some specimen may have come within her range of vision.

Nelly said to Mrs. Verrall on January 31st, 1901:—

(1)

'Heard from their on 7th.'  
'my mother nearly as mother'  
'from a the Hall and by Allen and'  
'morning her death told some how.'  
- My father and the door opening  
2 A M. his searching any  
room - found opened part  
ashop or not is for 7 others -  
next morning a letter told his  
father George died at that time.  
H. Hoffman as

(2)

9th p. 463  
about fundamental changes - full  
208,5  
need of verification by facts 466.

✓ [ From what possibility of Moser - making  
to create fire? ]  
from some of the

'anything can be found from history'  
p. 468.

H. H. H.



(3)

Equine dream, preliminary &  
some wrong or in all the very  
next day: - up at the time that  
is a dream a horse in a house  
etc. - on floor - suddenly back  
from the other and flew up at  
the skin. This happened.

May 1867: from that time  
Equine dreams occurred from  
time to time but the horse no  
longer had an "evil eye" and  
dream was not preliminary.

(4)

may P.E.

Take opportunity of it. If it is it  
Cause of general fall in price  
It is general fall in price.  
But it, means the 'cheap' is really  
: but attend to oppose the cause of the  
equine or fall. or

of also 'value of money'.

472 Defect of Ricardo's Logic  
Lays "on the heights" as - fall





'Mother looked on his photograph (i.e. a signed photograph of Mr. Sidgwick) to see if the signature were the same, and did not think the 'Sidgwick,' written full, like. She's not got any writing of his."

The possibility of forgery must suggest itself to every mind; but only in my opinion to be instantly dismissed after a careful study of the documents, after consideration of the fact of at least some portion of the script having been produced *currente calamo* before a witness, and then with the pencil held in an unusual fashion, and also on general grounds.

*Sitting of June 2nd, 1900.*

In spite of Nelly's denial of responsibility for any of the automatic script, there is one instance where it is extremely difficult to suppose that she was not the author of it.

At this sitting a lady had entered the séance-room towards the end of the trance; and after Nelly had made one or two slight references to her, the following sentences were written:—"Don't ask me any more questions. I hate the blue blouse." The lady in question was wearing a blue blouse. Now, throughout this sitting there was not the slightest indication that any control other than Nelly was concerned in the communications; and, even apart from that fact, the context indisputably shows that the "I" must refer to Nelly. The phraseology, too, is characteristic of her, and not at all of the other controls. Nor could this exception be explained away as an automatism in accord with other automatisms displayed elsewhere in the course of these phenomena, for, where it has sometimes happened that a control has unconsciously resorted to automatic writing, the writing has been produced simultaneously with the expression by means of direct speech of similar sentiments. The simplest explanation of the exception here to the general rule laid down by Nelly is that she wrote, instead of spoke, her feelings in order to avoid giving offence. Still the fact remains that this instance invalidates Nelly's definite pronouncement:—"It's not me that writes. It's always somebody else that's writing. Not me, even if I tell you so."

*Sitting of January 1st, 1901.*

Miss Bates was the sitter on this occasion, and, directly she entered the room, Nelly implied that the Geoffrey Scott control was waiting and anxious to communicate. Now, although Miss Bates did not come to the sitting with the intention of getting communications from or about the Scott control, still it is not inconceivable that there was a certain significance in his appearance on the scene, for she had not long before been staying with Mrs. Scott, and had, I believe, talked over with her the communications purporting to come from this control. Not that I am inclined to attach any weight to the coincidence, such as it is, for it was a defect, in my opinion, of a large number of the sittings with Thompson that the sitters were chosen from far too circumscribed a circle: so circumscribed that statements about one individual family or set of people had a good chance of proving to have some applicability, more or less remote, to more than one sitter. Still the coincidence existed, and it is therefore only fair to mention it. I had handed to the medium a silk muffler belonging to a brother of Miss Bates; whereupon Nelly said:—"Haven't you got the book? a little wet book belonging to this? a little book that has been wet?"

This book had already been mentioned before in connection with the Geoffrey Scott control, and consequently I understood to whom Nelly's next remark was meant to refer:—"Never mind. Give him a pencil and let him write. I can tell you the things, and he wants to write himself."

*J. G. P.*:—"Who is he?"

*Nelly*:—"The young man belonging to this (*i.e.* the muffler). It doesn't seem a stranger. It seems as if he wants to write. *He* wants to write, and *I* want to talk."

The medium then began to write a message evidently intended to proceed from the Scott control. Nelly did not on this occasion speak while the writing was being done, but waited until it was completed.

Then the Scott control spoke directly: to be followed immediately by Nelly again, who appeared to be rather cross at his intrusion. After the Scott control had used the direct voice, Nelly recognised who he was; though it will be

observed that before the completion of the script she seemed to be unaware of who the spirit was.

If one is justified in holding that Nelly represents her own experiences as they represent themselves to her, that is, if the alleged phenomena of the trance are genuine and not pretence, one must conclude that a spirit is "near" enough to employ both direct writing and direct speech as a method of communication, and yet not near enough for another and presumably simultaneously controlling spirit to recognise; or, if these controls are no more than secondary personalities, that of two separate personalities in simultaneous or almost simultaneous activity, personality *A.* can be aware of the activity of personality *B.*, while yet unable or unwilling to recognise the identity of its fellow-personality. If the whole thing is humbug, what stupid humbug it is!

*Sitting of January 3rd, 1901.*

If the last episode might strike a sceptic as stupid humbug, one which is to be found in this sitting would on the contrary have to be rated as decidedly ingenious, and as a happy imitation of authentic automatism. The Percival control had written a sentence or two, and had also used the direct voice. Nelly also had been speaking. I was engaged in taking some objects out of a case which had belonged to Edward Horace Percival before presenting it to the medium, when Nelly broke in with:

"Take his photo. out too. I know what he's like. He has been here writing. (In this case Nelly was able to recognise a spirit who had been writing.) Take your secrets with you. He was writing because Mr. Stainton Moses said:—'Write, lad, and I'll help thee.'"

*J. G. P.*:—"He spoke also."

*Nelly*:—"I didn't know he spoke."

The medium then wrote:—"Rog Percy (or Perciv) Aun my mot."

*J. G. P.*:—"What is written?"

*Nelly*: "He wrote and said: 'My mother has my photograph.' P'raps that's nothing."

It will be seen that the words, "My mother has my

photograph," had not been written, only "My mot," and Nelly apparently completed the sentence (cf. p. 240). The letters "Aun" probably were the first three letters of the word Aunt. E. H. Percival's aunt was present at the sitting, and before the sitters had entered the room the following had been written:—"Aunt and my mother want to come together."

It is altogether a very complex phenomenon, for Nelly knows that the control has been writing, while ignorant of his having also spoken, and states that he has written a sentence of which, as a matter of fact, only one word and a half actually was completed.

According to my notes Nelly is made to use the abbreviation "photo.", whereas she is made to report the Percival control as using the word "photograph." I cannot absolutely guarantee the exactitude of my record on this point; but I feel fairly confident that the full word was employed on one occasion, and the abbreviated form on the other. If this really was so, it is but another illustration of the consistent and apparently undesigned maintenance of characteristic shades of difference in the speech of the various controls.

## (12) PROPHECIES.

Nelly, like the controls of most mediums, revels in predictions. A statement put in the form of a prediction has this great advantage over statements which are referred to the present or past that, unless the prophet is indiscreet enough to define the period within which fulfilment is to take place, there is, if not all eternity ahead, at least many years in which to await verification.

The dominant note of a large proportion of Nelly's prophecies is their gloom, their appalling gloom. I have noted in all 25 predictions in the series of sittings under discussion, and out of these eleven are of a lugubrious character. Some are neither cheerful nor the reverse; the most inspiring one *that I can find* is to this effect, namely, that some one

who is dead would have been better off (*i.e.* would have come in for money) had he lived. Nelly takes the most dismal views of people's health. On several occasions she has shown anxiety to number my days; not that I've ever allowed her to get so far, because happily I have foreseen what was coming (I have learnt to recognise the sympathetic voice and manner with which she prophesies evil things), and stopped her in time. I will show a similar consideration for those whose unhappy future Nelly has presaged by refraining from quoting their names; but I will cite the predictions in full for fear of being thought to have overstated the case.

Of A. she said on January 10th, 1900, and she had already said the same thing before:—"I don't think [A] will be better at all. He will have to go away from [his present place of residence]. . . . He went to Brighton, and won't be better when he comes back."

So far I am glad to say A. is better.

Of B. Nelly said on January 16th, 1900:—"Something is going to happen to her. Somebody belonging to her is going to be seriously ill, a lady, an elderly lady."

B. has no elderly lady in her immediate surroundings, and so no elderly lady belonging to her has been seriously ill.

For the sister of a lady from whom communications purported to come death by accident was predicted. "This lady has a sister alive, and she will die just the same way. Her leg was bleeding so, like internal exhaustion." This was given on February 6th, 1900, and the lady's sister has escaped her fate so far.

Of C., to whom Nelly frequently alluded in desponding terms, she said on December 20th, 1900:—"You know [C.] says he's cured. He isn't, it's all nonsense; he'll break out worse than ever." Since this prediction, with, I believe, the exception of one slight and short relapse, C.'s health, which Mrs. Thompson knew to be very bad at the time, has maintained a steady improvement, and he has not broken out worse than ever.

On October 28th, 1899, Nelly predicted of D. that she was "going to be very ill: a downright prostration; ill enough not to be able to do anything or take any interest in anything." Nothing of the kind happened.

Some months before D. had been ill, and the illness resulted in a certain amount of prostration; but apart from the fact that Nelly's words, if applied to D.'s past state of health, would be too strong, the cause of D.'s illness was a specific disease, and not merely general ill-health. Had Nelly predicted that D. would suffer from this specific disease, one might have been justified in supposing that, in spite of the wrong time-relation, this was an instance of supernaturally acquired knowledge.

But this was not the end of poor D.'s troubles. Not only was she to be ill, but her illness was to be caused by a domestic trouble:—"I think she will have a shock in the near future—by Christmas—caused by something to happen in her family: not a death or monetary loss, but some family matter. The shock will quite prostrate her, but the illness will not be dangerous. There is an M.P. who belongs to her family, and some one between her and the M.P. will be the object of the shock. Cecil is the name, or anyhow some name beginning with a C."

D. experienced no shock by Christmas, nor after it. She was not prostrated, and no member of her family is a M.P.

In the course of one of Mrs. Benson's sittings on December 18th, 1899, E., between whom and Mrs. Benson there is no connection, was favoured with a gloomy forecast, shot out in the most casual and abrupt manner.

"A great shock," exclaimed Nelly, "coming to E.," and no more was said about E. at that sitting.

Some months before this sitting E. had received what might undoubtedly be termed "a great shock" from seeing a friend killed before his eyes, as the result of a terrible accident. Eighteen months after the prediction E.'s mother died, after a short illness, but as E.'s mother was in her 68th year when she died, it is a debatable point whether her death, though preceded by only a short illness, could be regarded as a great shock. And in any case the words used by Nelly are too vague, and shocks great and small too frequent in this transitory life to allow of any success being claimed for the prediction.

At the same sitting Nelly said to F.:—"Have you got a lot of cotton-wool? like rolls of cotton-wool. Perhaps it's coming.

'ackets of cotton-wool. Going to be used for some one who is ill in bed."

F.'s wife had some six months previously undergone a light operation, for which large quantities of cotton-wool had been employed.

Nelly, it will be noticed, does not refer this event with certainty to the future, and so, if her statement is referred to the past, it has some significance; but operations are undergone by a not inconsiderable proportion of the population, and cotton-wool is employed, I suppose, in many of them, and as the patient was not indicated, such coincidences there is is worth next to nothing.

No sooner were the words about rolls of cotton-wool out of her mouth than there was borne in upon Nelly's boding mind some vague presentiment of black fate brooding over Mrs. Thompson's head.

"You'll see, something dreadful is going to happen to Mother. I see black all round her head. As long as it's not Victor, it doesn't matter. Something to come after Christmas."

Mrs. Thompson must be acquitted of having taken steps to bring about a fulfilment of this prophecy, for to the best of my knowledge nothing dreadful happened to her. Her son Victor had chicken-pox about January 12th, but the attack was not dangerous, and so his illness could not have been described as "something dreadful."

About G., whom Mrs. Thompson knew to be seriously ill, Nelly uttered the following prophecy on January 12th, 1900:—"Do you think G. is going to have a fit? Looking blue: he seems to be put on a leather sofa—not in a station—dark American leather—very dark—shiny. I can't hear any trains, I can't see any familiar faces."

The ascription of this event to the future is somewhat hesitating, and had G. had a fit under the circumstances described, and could the fact have been shown to have been outside Mrs. Thompson's cognisance, some weight might have been accorded to Nelly's statement. But to the best of my belief G. had no experience either before or after January 12th, 1900, which in any way tallied with Nelly's impression.

On April 19th, 1900, H. was told that he "is going to have a terrible disappointment. He won't get something he



has set his heart upon." More than three years have passed since April 1900, but so far the prophecy remains unfulfilled.

On January 18th, 1900, the following cheering statement was addressed by Nelly to Mr. "Wilson," who had recently been in great trouble:—"You mustn't be sad in your heart. You've got a much greater trouble ahead of you than you think." This may, of course, prove true, but so far it has not.

This ends my list of Nelly's gloomy forebodings, and so far for not one of them can success be claimed. One is almost tempted to deduce from them a law ("Nelly's law"), that if anything unpleasant is foretold it is sure not to come off.

I may be accused of treating this part of the subject with undue flippancy. If my flippancy will only induce a flippant attitude in the victims of pessimistic prophecies, its object will have been attained.

Record predictions with the utmost care, date them, and get them countersigned by responsible persons; place the record in a sealed envelope, and deposit it in a bank; do anything with them you like, except allow yourself to be influenced by them. The bad effects that predictions can produce on nervous people are too obvious to need insisting on. A man sound in body and mind might listen unmoved to a prediction of the date and cause of his own death, mock at it, and disregard it. But illness comes and upsets the healthy bodily and mental balance, and what then? The prediction which sounded so absurd a few months back has now become rather disturbing, until at last it grips the man's imagination and thus may well secure its fulfilment.

Or, another possibility, X. is told that he will be involved in a bad carriage accident. Some time after he is out driving, the horses are frightened by a passing motor-car, the prediction suddenly flashes across X.'s mind, his nerve is momentarily shaken by the recollection, he loses his head for an instant, and an accident results, which, but for the paralysing effects of the prediction, would have never occurred.

The danger may not now appear very serious; but we can already note how gravely Spiritualists and others who believe in the reality of psychic phenomena treat previsions; and as *time goes on*, and as credence in telepathy and in other

similar matters grows, the utterances of mediums will be more highly prized, and no matter whether better evidence is forthcoming or not for previsions, prevision-stocks will improve in sympathy with the general tone of the market.

Had I now under my eyes the most abundant and positive proof of the existence of a precognitive faculty, I should not tone down my caution by a word; for proof of the possibility of prevision could not alter the fact that it is only a stray prophecy here and there that "comes off" out of Heaven knows how vast a total.

But to pass on to Nelly's other predictions:—

On November 29th, 1899, Nelly said to Dr. van Eeden:—"This gentleman thinks he is going back on a certain day; but there will be some commotion, which will make him change the date of departure—either one day earlier or later."

The date of Dr. van Eeden's departure was not fixed at the time of this sitting, but he left England several days later than he had intended originally. Thus the main point of the prediction was fulfilled, but, as usual, the details lacked fulfilment; for there was no commotion, and the departure was neither delayed nor advanced by one day, but delayed by several days.

A somewhat similar prediction was uttered on February 6th, 1900, concerning Mr. Myers, who was then abroad "Mr. Myers," said Nelly, "won't come home before the second week in April."

Mr. Myers' note on this is as follow:—"I then felt certain of returning March 31st, or April 2nd at latest. My wife's illness delayed me till April 17th." Nelly's actual words could apply correctly to April 17th; but their more natural meaning is that Mr. Myers would return in the course of the second week in April: which he did not do.

But whatever interpretation is put upon the words, neither this prediction, nor that about Dr. van Eeden's return home, strikes me as at all remarkable. Travellers' plans are so often upset, and the dates of departures and returns so frequently modified that it would be a safe shot to make in a large proportion of cases, especially where people are travelling for pleasure or health, and are not bound down by the restric

tions of return tickets of short validity, that the return home would not take place quite so soon as was expected.

A definite date is assigned in another prediction which followed close on the heels of the last. Towards the close of the sitting of February 6th, 1900, the last, as Mrs. Thompson knew, which she would be able to give for some time, Nelly said to me:—"I shall see you on the 4th of April." (See p. 202.) But the next sitting which I had with Mrs. Thompson was on April 19th. Mrs. Thompson was at home on April 4th, and, "that the prophecy might be fulfilled which was spoken by the mouth of" Nelly, could have offered me a sitting on that day, which I, having forgotten all about the prediction, should have guilelessly accepted. As a matter of fact, having, as I said, forgotten the prophecy entirely, I went on April 5th to Hampstead on the chance of finding Mrs. Thompson at home. I met her in the street on her way to keep an engagement, and there was no sitting. I am glad that I did not go on April 4th, or my subliminal would have been accused of having by an unworthy underhand trick attempted to score a success for Nelly.

As it was, the subliminal behaviour of Mrs. Thompson and myself was beyond reproach.

Another prediction of Nelly's Mrs. Thompson could have fulfilled had she wished to, instead of which she prevented its fulfilment. The prediction concerned a particular dress which was to be worn by Mrs. Thompson's daughter. Mrs. Thompson gave away the dress and so her daughter never wore it.

On December 18th, 1899, Nelly said in the course of one of Mrs. Benson's sittings which was held at my house:—"What has Mrs. Finch to do with this room? There is something which muddles up Mrs. Finch with this room."

*J. G. P.*:—"I mentioned to your mother that Mrs. Finch was coming."

*Nelly*:—"No, not that. It's like a feeling of Mrs. Finch with a cloak on with fur inside."

Later Nelly referred again to the same subject, this time putting her statement into the form of a prediction.

"Mrs. Finch will come here with a fur cloak. Mother hasn't got one. Red colour outside."

On the occasion of her second visit to my house Mrs. Finch wore a fur cloak, but the colour outside was not red, but brown. In any case, even had the prediction been verified, it would have been worth little or nothing, because as Mrs. Thompson was acquainted with Mrs. Finch, she might have known that she possessed a fur cloak of the kind described, and also because fur cloaks are worn by many people in the winter, and I suppose a good many are red outside. But Nelly's statement goes some way to show that Mrs. Thompson does not devise prophetic utterances from facts within her conscious knowledge. Indeed, I think this is sufficiently clear already from the gloomy anticipations which Nelly expressed about the health of two persons known to Mrs. Thompson. They were both in a bad state of health, as Mrs. Thompson knew quite well, but, so far as I can form an opinion, there does not appear to me to have been any reason to regard their condition despondently, nor do I believe that Mrs. Thompson was in possession of any special information which would have led her to form a less hopeful view of their prospects of recovery than I for instance did. Mrs. Thompson often spoke to me in a perfectly open and natural way about the two invalids, and never, so far as I remember, did she express opinions about their state of health which coincided with those expressed by the trance-personality. To the approaching dissolution of another individual known to myself and also to Mrs. Thompson Nelly often alludes. This individual is in average good health, and not at all old, is if anything in an improved state of health now, and I cannot imagine why Nelly looks forward to his approaching end with so much apparent certitude. It may be that this tendency to kill off people is a "note" of automatic romance. I think I have noticed in my own dream-fancyings a tendency to kill off my friends and acquaintances with an indelicate precipitancy quite unwarranted by their actual physical condition.

Though, as I have said, Mrs. Thompson in trance does not as a rule devise prophetic utterances from facts normally known to her, there are two apparent exceptions: though even of these one only came true.

Both referred to the Psychological Congress held at Paris in 1900, which Mrs. Thompson attended, and at the time the

predictions were given, I think she knew she either was going to attend it or was likely to. The two sitters concerned were Dr. van Eeden and Dr. Max Dessoir; and although I see no reason for supposing that Mrs. Thompson was aware of the identity of either, yet before trance began she must have recognised by their accent that both were foreigners, and it would be a natural enough assumption that any foreign gentleman who came to have a sitting with her would very likely be, if not one of our corresponding members, at least some one with an interest in psychology, and as such likely to attend the Congress in Paris.

To Dr. van Eeden Nelly said on December 1st, 1899:—"You are going to see my mother in Paris next year. You will be wearing a lighter-coloured felt hat at Paris than you are wearing now. But if you remember this prophecy, you must not go and buy one on purpose." Dr. van Eeden did meet Mrs. Thompson at the Congress the next year, but he followed Nelly's wise advice, and did not go and buy a lighter-coloured hat.

To Dr. Max Dessoir Nelly said on April 19th, 1900:—"When he sees me the next time he won't recognise me. I shall see him at Professor Richet's. Fluno—and Professor Richet will be altogether. Professor Richet, Mr. Myers, and you (*i.e.* Dr. Dessoir), and 'Whiskers,' and Flumeroy.

J. G. P.:—"Flurnoy?"

Nelly:—"No, not Flurnoy."

J. G. P.:—"Flammarion?"

Nelly:—"Not Flammarion—will be at Richet's."

As a matter of fact Dr. Dessoir was not at the Paris Congress and even if he had been, and had Mrs. Thompson met him there at Professor Richet's house in the company of Mr. Myers, the prediction would, of course, have been worth nothing.

I cannot attach much greater importance to another prediction of Nelly's which did indeed come true, and which at first sight is rather striking. A very effective prediction I should term it but a little reflection, together with some *mauvaise volonté* depreciates its charms. It has already been recorded in *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., p. 95. Nelly said to Dr. van Eeden at the close of his second sitting:—"Don't have any of that red sauce with fish at Cambridge. It won't suit you."

At the time Mrs. Thompson knew that she was going to meet

Dr. van Eeden at Cambridge in the course of a day or two at Mrs. Verrall's. It is a natural assumption that fish will form one of the courses at dinner, and fish sauces are usually either red, white, yellow, or green, and of the four, white and red, I should say, are the commoner. When Mrs. Thompson and Dr. van Eeden dined at Mrs. Verrall's the fish sauce was red. Nelly rather cunningly remarked at a sitting held after the dinner:—"It is funny you had red sauce with white fish. At Mother's house you would have had white sauce."

When Dr. van Eeden asked Nelly why she had advised him not to take the sauce, she replied:—"Well, don't you feel thirsty?" Dr. van Eeden denied the suggestion, and then Nelly at once asked:—"Are you a vegetable man?" Dr. van Eeden is a vegetarian, and this was no doubt what Nelly wished to convey. Dr. van Eeden considers that the likeliest explanation of the apparently irrelevant juxtaposition of the references to the unsuitability of the red fish-sauce and to his vegetarianism is to be found in the fact of the sauce having been coloured with cochineal, a process repugnant to strict vegetarian principles.

But if sauce coloured with cochineal is an unsuitable diet for a vegetarian, *a fortiori* the fish would be too. Dr. van Eeden's exegesis appears to me too subtle, and it is easier, I think, to suppose that the original reference to the fish-sauce and its unsuitability was only Nelly's roundabout way of saying:—"You're a vegetarian, and you're going to stay at a house where you won't get a vegetarian diet;" in other words, the red fish-sauce was used symbolically. The actual words used should be noted. They were:—"That red sauce with fish." The accent seems to be on the sauce, but it would be quite in keeping with Nelly's phraseology to take the words to mean no more than "fish with red sauce."

My conclusion, then, is that Nelly's warning to Dr. van Eeden need not, and indeed should not, be treated as precognitive, but simply as a specimen of the dramatic utilisation of knowledge supernormally acquired from the sitter.

Three more unsuccessful prophecies remain to be recorded.

On January 5th, 1900, Nelly said to Mrs. X.:—"It seems to me you will go abroad in the spring. I don't know what it would be for you would go abroad."

*Mrs. X.*:—"Far abroad?"

*Nelly*:—"Yes, it would be just the Continent."

Many people go abroad to the Continent in the spring and at other seasons of the year; so, even had the prediction come true, it would not have been remarkable; but Mrs. X. was disobliging enough not to do so, nor at the time of the sitting did she think there was any likelihood of her doing so, so Nelly's remark could not be put down to her having read some project latent in Mrs. X.'s mind. Her husband was fighting in South Africa at the time, and if she were to take a journey abroad at all she may well have fancied that her destination would be South Africa. Hence, I imagine, the question, "Far abroad?": to which Nelly ought of course to have replied if she had any respect for professional precedent:—"Oh, yes; far, far abroad; I see you on a big ship, etc., etc."

The next prophecy was given in what seemed to be the most gratuitous manner. On January 10th, 1900, Nelly said casually:—"You know so and so (naming a well-known personage). They call her F. in private. I'm going to talk to her one of these days. She isn't hard in her heart." And then almost directly afterwards:—"What I saw was [the great personage's] photo.—then the letter F."

The medium was holding a letter signed F. which had been given her at the previous sitting, and given in such a way that she could have seen the signature. The personage's name also began with F., and this appears to have been the only foundation, not only for the association of ideas, but also for the prediction, which, though it may of course come true one of these days, has not come true so far, and is not, I think, ever likely to.

Then again on April 19th, 1900, Dr. Max Dessoir was told that "he will have cause for rushing up against van Renterghem, both in body and opinions." Nelly had introduced the subject by saying, "I want to say that name van Renterghem. I don't want to call this gentleman (*i.e.* Dr. Dessoir) by that name." This prediction is similar in character to two predictions already mentioned, in which Nelly told first Dr. van Eeden and later Dr. Dessoir that they would meet her or her mother at the Paris Congress of Psychology, and a similar explanation of the train of reasoning which gave rise to these two predictions can be

plied here. Dr. van Renterghem, a well-known physician at Amsterdam, who both practises and has written about hypnotism, had been associated by Nelly with Dr. van Eeden, and rightly so. Before associating Dr. Dessoir with Dr. van Renterghem, Nelly had recognised Dr. Dessoir as a hypnotist. Findful, it may be, of the frequency of controversy between others of the same craft, Nelly hazards the not unlikely guess that two fellow hypnotists would "rush up against one another both in body and opinions," a forceful expression not entirely unsuitable to many a fray where doctors disagree. Happily, in this case, our two distinguished foreign members have hitherto failed to live up to the prediction.

On December 20th, 1900, Nelly predicted who would be the sitter at the next sitting. "I'm going to see you with that spectacled gentleman the next time. I don't know who it is, but I put it down for the truth."

I put it down for the truth, and took no measures either to help or to impede the truth coming true.

Unhappily, instead of a spectacled gentleman, the next sitter was a lady wearing pince-nez. Nelly pointed out the failure herself:—"The gentleman with the spectacles—I told you he was coming. You see it isn't a gentleman with spectacles on." She was not in the least disconcerted, nor did she try to explain away the non-success of her prediction. In fact the failure of her predictions does not seem to worry her; I suppose she has the good sense to set no great store by them. And yet, as my last two instances will show, some of her prophecies are veridical.

Thus on February 1st, 1900, Nelly remarked *en passant*:—"Why's Colin Campbell written on your head? He's coming. We've got to talk to him one of these days."

Mr. Myers, when he saw the record of this sitting, wrote the following comment: "I have a friend of that name whom I have *since independently* thought of asking to a séance." By the words "since independently" Mr. Myers evidently meant since the prediction was given, and before I saw the record."

It is true that Colin Campbell is connected by Nelly with me, and not with Mr. Myers; but if Mr. Myers' friend had had a sitting with Mrs. Thompson about this time, it is pro-



bable that I should have been present as recorder. I cannot prove, of course, that Mrs. Thompson did not know that Mr. Myers knew Mr. Colin Campbell. She may have known it and done no more than make a lucky guess. Nor must we assume that, because Mr. Myers did not consciously remember having thought of Mr. Colin Campbell as a possible sitter until after Nelly's statement had been made, subconsciously he had not already contemplated asking him to come to a sitting. Still, if we regard the incident as indicative of supernormal faculty of some kind, we cannot anyhow class it as a case of true prevision, for Mr. Colin Campbell never did attend a sitting, and, so far as I am aware, he was not even invited.

But whatever doubts I have about this case, I have no hesitation in dismissing guess-work or normal processes of obtaining information as inadequate to explain the final instance on my list. Towards the end of a sitting held on January 3rd, 1901, nothing having occurred to suggest the remark, Nelly said:—

“Will you give my love to her—Mr. Ernest Bennett—you know who I mean. I'm talking to you (*i.e.* J. G. P.)—not about the book. He's going to tell you a lot of things. (This was repeated.)

“What made me think of it (this in answer to a question asked by J. G. P.) was I saw a lot of people dressed up like ghosts, and then I could hear you and Mr. Bennett laughing—and then—and then you seem to have indigestion after.”

*J. G. P.*:—“Is it future or past?”

*Nelly*:—“After; it's what you've got to come to.”

Now the facts which seem to me to correspond with Nelly's words too closely to be explained by chance coincidence were these.

The sitting ended about 5 p.m., and after it I went straight home. Being overtired, and as a consequence of the over-fatigue suffering from indigestion, I lay down on my bed in order to rest. I had been resting some twenty minutes or so when Mr. Ernest Bennett called to see me. I had no idea he was going to call, nor did I know any particular reason why he should. I asked him to come and talk to me in my bedroom, so that I might remain lying down.

ation this detail in order to show that the attack of stion was of a sufficiently definite character to make receive a caller in my bedroom. Of course, as soon as told that Mr. Bennett had called, Nelly's prediction into my mind; but I was careful to avoid leading the rsation in any way which might bring about a fulfil-

Mr. Bennett at once explained the object of his visit, was to tell me of his experiences at a haunted house e West of England. I had been investigating the case, knew that Mr. Bennett was also interested in it, and he proposed to go and stay in the haunted house on the convenient opportunity. I could not at the time aber with certainty whether I had known that he had d, or was shortly going to visit the house; my impression hat I was unaware of his having actually carried out his ted visit. I am inclined to think that this impression correct, because, when Mr. Bennett called at my house,

not any notion what he could be coming to talk about; also when Nelly spoke about Mr. Bennett and people ng up as ghosts it suggested nothing to my mind.

good many different phenomena were said to have taken at the haunted house in question. I was inclined at the to set down the tales of haunting to hallucinations pro- by fright on young people of highly nervous tempera- , and had not thought of attributing them to practical 3. Mr. Bennett, in the course of narrating his experi- , expressed the opinion that one of the alleged phenomena lue to a servant's practical joke.

is true that we had a good laugh over this and other rs; but I think Mrs. Thompson either knew or knew of Ernest Bennett, and if so, I cannot attach much importance elly having said: "Then I could hear you and Mr. ett laughing." Mr. Bennett will, I hope, forgive me, if that, as a rule, where he is, there too is laughter, and "laughter holding both her sides."

, too, it may not have needed any supernormal faculty to ise that I should suffer from indigestion within an hour of the sitting; but it was not said that Mr. Bennett would me a lot of things" within the next hour or two, and conversation and my fit of indigestion were foretold as

nearly contemporaneous events, to happen at some quite undefined future time.

Again, Mr. Bennett and myself being both psychical researchers, it may be urged that there was nothing extraordinary in prophesying that at some future time he would "tell me a lot of things," and that among the lot of things ghosts and practical joking would be referred to. Or again, it may be objected that Nelly did not categorically say that Mr. Bennett would talk about people dressing up as ghosts, and that all she said was:—"I saw a lot of people dressed up like ghosts, and then I could hear you and Mr. Bennett laughing." That is true enough, but though each separate statement made by Nelly can be whittled away in some such fashion, we have not to consider only each component statement separately, but also the whole compound statement. And here, for my own part, I feel compelled to have recourse to an explanation involving some form of supernatural faculty.

The manner in which the message emerged rather suggests that the source of Nelly's knowledge was telepathic. First she seems to be in communication with Mr. Bennett. She discovers that he is going to "tell me a lot of things," and that the subject of his communication is ghosts, and that it is provocative of mirth. All these three facts were almost certainly in Mr. Bennett's thoughts at the time of the sitting.

"And then you seem to have indigestion." Here she appears to enlarge her survey of the eventuality by drawing on my own knowledge of my physical condition, or perhaps by her own perception of it. The words, "and then"—repeated—may perhaps indicate a fresh source of information. A telepathic explanation will suffice; but I own that I felt at the time that Nelly was not by any complicated process deducing the future from present knowledge, but really watching and describing an event in the future as it presented itself *de toute pièce* before her eyes.

## (13) A PET SUBJECT OF NELLY'S.

There is one string on which Nelly harps with such persistency that I grew to listen for the familiar twang at each ring. Babies—babies who died at, or before, or soon after birth, are a subject of irresistible attraction to Nelly. What may ask can be the reason of this *cliché*? It can hardly be for the sake of scoring an easy hit, for Nelly has a very good notion of what is evidentially telling, and more than once, in making some obvious statement, she has pulled herself up and spontaneously deprecated any value being allowed to it. Does it seem probable that this tendency to saddle sitters with dead little brothers or sisters or children is a method of "ringing," for even if the sitter owns to the fact, how can such admission afford any further clue likely to be of assistance, and what pregnant inference can be drawn from it?

It may be that the explanation must be looked for in the peculiar circumstances of the life-history of the real Nelly.

Thompson's daughter Nelly died when only a few months old and her own brief span of earth-life may perhaps account for her interest in "the fate of the unbaptised." This hypothesis

will hold good whichever view is taken of the nature of the control: for if Nelly be no more than the heroine of a story of trance-fiction, she is a life-like creation, and to invent for her this sympathetic interest in those who had suffered a like fate to that of her own prototype would be a faithful touch-note, I suppose, beyond the powers of secondary personality. On the other hand, again, it may be a "note" of trance-communications; for though I cannot pretend to have analysed the Piper records of the medium, I think I am justified in saying that with Phinuit, too, the *anima* are a favourite topic, though, by the way, Nelly and Phinuit are far from representing them as *flentes in limine* of the other world.

Whatever be the true explanation, considering the very large proportion of families which must number among their members some member whose lease of life lapsed after a few short

hours or weeks, the references made by Nelly to deaths in babyhood met with relatively only small success.

Sir Oliver Lodge (see *Proceedings*, Vol. VI., p. 450) has noticed that Phinuit "seems to be under some compulsion not to be silent," and he thinks that a good deal of his conversation is introduced as a stop-gap. Possibly under this head should fall many of Phinuit's references to dead babies. Nelly, so far as my observation goes, does not exhibit any signs of being under any compulsion to talk; at the end of a sitting when the serious work is over she will chatter like a magpie, but during the serious business of the séance she does not appear to be under any necessity to speak without intermission. Sometimes she will go away for a few minutes; at others, maintain silence for a minute or two. So I do not fancy that Nelly interpolates statements about babies in order to mark time.

Throughout spiritualistic trance-communications may be observed a uniformly latitudinarian strain: an emphatic protest against theological bigotry and dogmatism of all kinds irrespective of any particular creed or sect. I suppose that nothing has been more abhorrent to the modern conscience than certain eschatological teachings about the fate of unbaptised children; and it is conceivable that the insistence both of Phinuit and of Nelly upon the presence of babies in the same spheres of existence which the adult dead inhabit should be traced to a common desire to protest against this damnable dogma.

*Sitting of November 29th, 1899.*

This was Dr. van Eeden's first sitting, but the trance-utterances were not entirely confined to his affairs: references being also made to Professor William James, and to a former sitter called by Nelly "Raymond's mother." Raymond was the dead son, and about him Nelly had at former sittings given many correct details. On this occasion she added a few more, one of which ultimately proved to be true, although the mother was not able to verify it at the time, and in fact had never known it. In the course of the additional statements about Raymond the following occurred:—"Raymond said there was a little baby belonging to 'them' that wasn't grown up, and it has not got a name at all."

With regard to this point Raymond's mother wrote to me on February 11th, 1900:—"This is very puzzling, and I can only think of the fact that my mother died in premature childbirth more than 20 years ago. Nelly has each time claimed my mother's care as being given to my little boy."

But obviously so indirect a correspondence as this cannot possibly count.

*Sitting of December 1st, 1899.*

Dr. van Eeden had handed to the medium a box containing the hair of a dead gentleman. The box had been in the possession of his widow for several years. Several correct statements were made about both the husband and the wife, though there was a certain amount of confusion, facts being predicated of the man which would have been true of the woman and *vice versa*. There was a break in the trance, and the second part of the sitting Nelly opened with these words:—"What was that dead baby associated with the hair-lady? It was not properly born." Dr. van Eeden said:—"I don't know"; and for the moment Nelly dropped the subject. But a few minutes later she reverted to it saying to Dr. van Eeden:—"I wish you would think about the dead baby. The hair-lady has the entire management of the dead baby."

The "hair-lady" was not dead, and so could not have the management of a dead baby, even had there been a dead baby to manage, and, so far as Dr. van Eeden could discover, there was no dead baby which could be said to be associated with either the lady or her husband.

The first reference to the baby formed the introductory words of the second part of the sitting, so in this instance there was no need for "gagging," for, if Nelly ever does "gag" in the Phinuit manner, she would hardly do so immediately on resuming after a recuperative interval, but by way of pulling herself together for a fresh effort: *bavarder pour mieux parler*.

*Sitting of January 5th, 1900.*

Four persons were present at the beginning of this sitting, but the principal sitter was a lady whom I call Miss Gordon. In the course of it Nelly said to Miss Gordon:—"This all

comes through a little girl who died long ago—your sister. She is now grown up.”

Miss Gordon never had a baby sister, or a sister who died young. A brother died two hours after birth.

*Sitting of January 18th, 1900.*

Mr. “Wilson” was the sitter on this occasion. Early in the sitting Nelly gave a personal description of a girl, which Mr. Wilson regarded as “a very good description” of a girl cousin of a dead lady to whom had belonged a stocking which he had just presented to the medium. This identification is supported by the fact that throughout Mr. Wilson’s sittings many other references were made which can be aptly applied to the cousin. Following directly on the personal description came these words:—“She seems to be taking charge of a little boy, a tiny brother or baby who died a long time ago.” “The baby looks up to her not as a mother, but as to an elder sister.”

Now the “she” would at first sight seem to refer to the cousin whose personal appearance had just before been sketched, but, although Nelly had not up to this point mentioned the lady called in the published report of these sittings Miss Clegg, both Mr. Wilson and myself understood the “she” to refer to a new character; and anyhow it was clear from what was said later that the dead baby was not associated in Nelly’s mind with the cousin, but with Miss Clegg. This second reference made just before a break in the trance ran as follows:—“She (*i.e.* Miss Clegg) has got a dead baby with her. I’ve got one of Mother’s dead babies at our house. Mother doesn’t think it was a little live boy, but it was.” And later she added:—“You wouldn’t mind me saying that there is a dead baby in connection with the stocking.” It will be noticed that the “little boy, a tiny brother or baby” has become a mere “dead baby” of undefined sex. In reality a *sister* of Miss Clegg’s had died in babyhood.

*Sitting of January 25th, 1900.*

This was Mr. Wilson’s second sitting. No further reference was made to the baby associated with Miss Clegg, but Nelly

said :—" I couldn't find the lady (*i.e.* Miss Clegg) anywhere. I could only find a brother of this gentleman (*i.e.* Mr. Wilson) who died when he was quite a tiny microbe baby." A brother of Mr. Wilson's had died within a few hours after its birth.

*Sitting of May 30th, 1900.*

In the course of this sitting Nelly said to Mrs. Benson : "When I died, a little baby—little baby boy died belonging to you. He died when he was a tiny boy. He loves you just the same."

This statement is not correct.

*Sitting of June 2nd, 1900.*

Towards the end of this, Dr. van Eeden's fifth sitting, a lady staying in the house where the séance was held entered the room, coming in from behind the medium. According to her own assertion Mrs. Thompson had not previously met her about the house. Before coming into what would appear to be the medium's range of vision Nelly said :—" I can see her : she has a light drab-coloured skirt. She has a brother in our house. (Here the lady signified her dissent.) I am quite sure about it. He has died perhaps as a baby."

This, I must admit, is in the true Phinuitesque manner.

*Sitting of June 7th, 1900.*

At this, Dr. van Eeden's sixth sitting, he asked Nelly for more information about this lady's little brother, and the answer came again in the typical Phinuit style :—" It was a grown up man saying 'This is my sister.'"

(14) NELLY ON PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.

Mrs. Piper has never, I believe, claimed to produce physical phenomena : and among a certain school of psychical researchers this failure to sound "*toute la lyre*" of mediumship



has been counted unto her for righteousness. Having a sneaking affection for physical phenomena, I am glad that Nelly has the courage of her opinions and boldly proclaims their feasibility, and further lays claim to having produced such things herself.

So in this matter too we note a distinction between the phenomena of Mrs. Piper and those of Mrs. Thompson; and it is a distinction which Mrs. Thompson, were she an impostor, and well acquainted as she is with the attitude of many members of this Society towards physical phenomena, would have taken good care not to have invented, and certainly not to have emphasised.

*Sitting of November 29th, 1899.*

*Nelly* :—"That gentleman [*i.e.* Dr. van Eeden] has been to a materialising séance."

*Dr. van Eeden* :—"When?"

*Nelly* :—"A short time ago. There is a strong influence of somebody cheating all the time: taking off clothes and so on: fraudulent throughout."

This statement was not applicable to Dr. van Eeden; though it would have been to myself, the recorder.

I then asked Nelly to tell me what she thought about materialisations: were they occasionally genuine? In reply she gave this message from Mrs. Cartwright:—"Whenever a spirit materialises it is quite a *spontaneous* thing."

Nelly proceeded to explain this by saying:—"It can't be done to order once a week"; and added, "Mrs. Cartwright dictated that bit" (meaning the dictum about materialisation being a spontaneous thing), "and also about Alice James" (referring to a previous incident in the sitting).

Very soon after this Dr. van Eeden asks Nelly if she can appear to people in dreams, and gets the reply:—"I never tried except with Mother. I'm going to materialise one day for Father to show him the colour of my hair: black curly hair, not light like Mother's."

"Mr. Thurstan's sister came and talked at Mother's house. She was materialised." (This was quoted as an instance of a *non-fraudulent* materialisation.)

Mrs. Corner *once* was properly materialised—about three years ago—at a lady's house."

*Sitting of January 11th, 1901.*

Mr. Gurney went and talked to Miss Rawson. He didn't even mind knocking a table for her."

Unfortunately I have not had access to all the records of Miss Rawson's trances, which, moreover, have not, I believe, been very methodically kept, and I cannot therefore speak with complete certainty, but from the best information that I have been able to obtain it appears that a *soi-disant* Edmund Gurney does play some part in Miss Rawson's trance-phenomena, though it is not certain that this control has ever purported to communicate by means of raps in her case. For a fuller discussion see pp. 301-2.

*Sitting of January 12th, 1900.*

*A propos* of Mrs. Benson Nelly said:—"There's a place in Birmingham where Mother often goes: it's 'Bensons Limited.' I knocked and shook a table in that shop before I knew Mr. Gurney."

#### (15) THE "SUSANNA PARKES" CASE.

I offer no apology for including in this report another incident which cannot be treated as evidential, because my main aim throughout has been not so much to bring forward 'evidential' facts as by applying the test of classification to see how far the phenomena present a consistent character, such as we should expect to result from an examination of genuine, and not from an examination of spurious phenomena.

The incident in question belongs to a class which lends itself readily to the ridicule of the man who prides himself on his common-sense. I have a good deal of sympathy

with that type of person, perhaps more because he is such a refreshing contrast to the man who seems to pride himself upon the want of it than from any deep admiration for his intellectual penetration. There is a certain danger, too, in allowing weight to a type of phenomenon which can not only be aped by the dishonest with the greatest ease, but which can also be used to explain away many a suspicious circumstance. Yet, if the objections of the common-sense man had always been listened to, there would have been no psychical research. I venture therefore to proceed, after warning the man of common common-sense off this section.

The facts of the case were reported in writing to Mr. Myers by Mr. Thompson as long ago as November 27th, 1899: a point of some importance; for, had nothing been heard of the matter before the publication of Dr. Hodgson's report on his six sittings with Mrs. Thompson, or before, at any rate, it was known that he was not satisfied of her *bona fides*, it would have been a reasonable suggestion that the following story had been concocted for the purpose of throwing a favourable light on those circumstances of Mrs. Barker's sittings which aroused Dr. Hodgson's suspicions.

I append Mr. Thompson's report, which is dated November 27th, 1899:—

*Re Control Susanna Parkes.*

On Monday, 26th June, 1899, Mrs. Thompson was suddenly controlled by what purported to be an old lady. Certainly Mrs. Thompson's face was very drawn, and she looked quite different whilst influenced to speak to any time previously. I quite felt at the time it was an old person speaking: her voice and manner were just those of an old-fashioned country person. I put the following questions:—

1. Who are you?

With great difficulty the control said: "Susanna Parkes."

2. Where did you live when on earth?

"Birmingham."

3. How old were you when you died?

"Sixty-nine."

4. What ailment caused your death?

"Great sufferer, great sufferer."

(I could not get any other reply than this.)

5. Are you any relation of our old friend Miss Parkes? I cannot think of any one else of that name.

"Yes, I am her mother. She is my only child Mary."

6. Have you any message for Mary? though I fear now, through age, she would not understand a message, if you sent one to her. She has lost her memory.

"I have no message. I was buried at All Saints' Church."

Directly she had finished saying this Mrs. Thompson awoke. I told her what had taken place, read my notes aloud, and asked her if she knew these facts: the very old lady, Miss Parkes, being more a friend of Mrs. Thompson's than of mine.

She replied:—"I do not know anything of Miss Parkes' relatives, except that she had a blind father. I only knew Miss Parkes in 1886, and she was nearly seventy then. I know she was an only child, and that she had no living relatives; that when her parents were alive they lived in Birmingham; but I never remember her speaking of the place where her mother was buried or of her age."

Miss Parkes lives still in Birmingham, but is too old to be questioned, so we let the matter drop until one day in September, 1899, Mrs. Thompson found a very old diary of 1855 in a play-closet amongst the children's toys, etc. She found out it had been given in December, 1888, to one of the children by Miss Parkes: the child having visited the old lady, it had been given him to play with. Mrs. Thompson opened the diary, and the first thing she saw was an entry of Miss Parkes' mother's death.

You will notice the old lady who controlled Mrs. Thompson gave no details except what was *written down*.

Mrs. Thompson says she is positive she had never seen or known of the existence of that diary; it being folded up in a case similar to a Banker's pass-book, in darkish red leather, and was certainly not an ordinary every-day looking thing.

Mrs. Thompson and myself were the only people who knew of the Susanna Parkes incident, but Mrs. Thompson wishes me to write out these details as being of interest with regard to the question: "Are names and facts which have been written easier for a spirit to see than when they only exist in one's memory?"

I am rather inclined to think they are. Of course this does not alter the fact that the controls or spirits very often give accounts of things neither written or in one's memory: prophecies of the future, for instance.

With this report Mr. Thompson sent the leaf from the almanack containing the entry of the death. The date of the almanack is 1855, and the entry made under the date of February 13th, runs as follows:—

“Friday, 13th, 1857. My Mother died at 1 in the morning after 9 months’ suffering and was burried [sic] at All Saints’ Church the 15, aged 69. Susanna Parkes.”

It will be seen that Mr. Thompson was not quite right in stating that the control gave no details except such as were written in the almanack. In the trance the name of Susanna Parkes’ daughter was given as Mary, the latter was said to be an only daughter, and the place where the former lived was given as Birmingham. But these details, which were not contained in the entry in the almanack, were probably all known to Mrs. Thompson, or if not known, could have been guessed. Mrs. Thompson knew that Miss Parkes was an only child, and that her parents lived in Birmingham, and it is safe to assume that she knew Miss Parkes’ Christian name to be Mary.

Whatever view is taken of the character of the control in this case, it would be difficult to deny that the subject-matter of the communication was drawn from, or based on, or suggested by, the entry in the almanack.

I asked Nelly about this incident at the sitting of November 29th, 1899, and Nelly gave the following explanation:—that “Auntie Parkes was really controlling her mother; that the spirits did not get at the information contained in the almanack, but Susanna Parkes was led to give the same information as in the almanack ‘by association.’”

This comment is not illuminating, and it in some degree clashes with a remark made by Mrs. Cartwright in the course of Mrs. Barker’s second sitting (see *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., p. 151): “The worst is we read the contents of a letter without getting the message of the spirit.”

Yet this case is not entirely unparalleled: the familiar experience of thinking of a person while a letter from this person is lying in your letter-box has some points in common with it; and sometimes under these circumstances even the contents of the unopened letter appear to enter the mind of

the addressee. For instances of this—instances, however, so far very rare—see *Human Personality*, Vol. I., sections 421H and J, and 656B of the Appendices.

If there is such a faculty as clairvoyance, and by clairvoyance I mean supernormal acquisition of knowledge under circumstances where telepathy from the mind of a living or dead being is excluded, belief in such a phenomenon as the one under consideration does not present so great difficulty as it must if telepathy is the only process by which a mind can receive impressions otherwise than through the organs of sense. Unfortunately the evidence for clairvoyance is weak, and so it seems the wiser course to content ourselves with recording cases of this kind, and to wait patiently in the hope of fresh evidence pointing in the same direction.

Yet the mere contiguity of a thing—of a material thing—does appear to facilitate the reception of (presumably) telepathic messages; for otherwise why is it the almost universal, or at least the favourite, custom of mediums to hold an object connected with the person, whether living or dead, about whom communications are sought for? And the psychometrist too seems unable to get to work at all without handling a material object.

In the case of an entranced medium, or of a clairvoyant or psychometrist, it is possible to suppose that the handling of an object has a subjective effect on the imagination of the sensitive, and in this way helps towards a successful result; but such an explanation would hardly hold water in this case, since Mrs. Thompson was unaware of the existence of the almanack. If the almanack had anything to do with the trance-utterance (and it is well-nigh impossible to imagine that it had not) the effect produced by it must be put down to its contiguity, or perhaps one should say to the fact of the medium having been in its vicinity.

#### (16) "SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES."

I have already mentioned (see p. 224) that Mrs. Thompson once displayed knowledge of the name of one of her sitters, Mrs. Benson, who at the time was supposed to be unknown to her.

At Mrs. Benson's first sitting, on December 18th, 1899, her name was not mentioned; but by the time that her second sitting (January 23rd, 1900) was held Nelly had talked about her by name frequently. In the first few days of February, 1900, I happened to be calling on Mrs. Crackanthorpe, a lady whom Mrs. Thompson knows well. She mentioned to me quite casually in the course of conversation that Mrs. Thompson had told her that she had been giving sittings to a Mrs. Benson. So on the earliest opportunity I asked Mrs. Thompson if she remembered the name of the lady with white hair who had had two sittings with her lately. Mrs. Thompson could not recall the name at once, but finally said "Mrs. Benson," and when I further asked her how she had succeeded in recalling the name, she said she had done so by thinking of "Bensons Limited," a restaurant in Birmingham (see p. 225). In reply to my further questions she went on to explain that she had learnt the name through Mr. Thompson, who had been told it by Nelly. Mr. Thompson had asked Nelly for communications on his own account, and on Nelly excusing herself on the plea of having a lot of work to do for other sitters, he had playfully taunted her with being too much taken up with "all these grand people" and refusing to take any trouble for her own father. To this Nelly had replied:—"Oh! it's only Mrs. Benson; *she* isn't a grand person; she's only an old lady with grey hair."

After the trance Mr. Thompson had given an account to his wife of what Nelly had said.

Now, it is quite evident that, if Nelly knows either the name of or any other fact about a sitter, there is nothing to prevent her from communicating her information to Mrs. Thompson, either directly in some clairvoyant manner, or by using Mr. Thompson as an intermediary. As a matter of fact I do not believe that this is a general practice of Nelly's, but if she acted in this way once she may do it always. I have quoted various instances of Mrs. Thompson acquiring information from Nelly when at home about things that have occurred at sittings; and these instances show that Mrs. Thompson's explanation of her knowledge of Mrs. Benson's name involved the dragging in of no new type of psychical experience, and that it was no hastily vamped up excuse invented on the spur of the moment to cover a slip on her part. I may add that her whole manner

ring our conversation was perfectly easy and natural, and not the least that of a person who has been cornered. Nor did she pretend for one moment that she did not know Mrs. Benson's name; it was clear that she knew she knew it, and that her only hesitation was caused by a momentary inability to recall the usual name. But, it may be asked, why did not Mrs. Thompson herself spontaneously tell me that she had learnt the name, as on other occasions she had told me of information imparted to her by Nelly?

Apart from the question of whether it would have seemed to Mrs. Thompson a matter of importance to let me know that she knew that Nelly had said that a sitter's name was so and so, I doubt if I gave her much opportunity for avowing her knowledge.

I questioned her on the subject on the first occasion that I visited her after I had seen Mrs. Crackanthorpe, that is on February 1, 1900, and I put my questions before trance began, and as soon as we had both settled down to prepare for the oncoming of the trance after the ordinary greetings were over.

If Mrs. Thompson had learnt of the identity of her sitter in the underhand way, it would stand to reason that she would take care to conceal her knowledge. Yet what do we actually find her doing? Letting out the fact that she knows a name which she would be supposed not to have known, and letting it out, not to some one who would be safe not to come in contact with her investigators, but to a lady whom she knew I knew, a lady, too, who was a member of our Society, and the wife of a member of our Council.

There were other circumstances connected with Mrs. Benson's sittings which I propose to deal with here under the heading "suspicious circumstances," though the term is inept, or at least must, to have any aptitude at all, be understood in a Pickwickian sense, for the circumstances do not really, or ought not to, cast suspicion on Mrs. Thompson. I am by no means sure that they ought not rather to be discussed under a heading entitled "Stupidities of Investigators," and followed by comments by Mrs. Thompson herself. The circumstances were these. The first object handed to Mrs. Thompson at Mrs. Benson's sitting was a ring, and this ring, I greatly regret to say, failed to observe was inscribed inside with the full names of a dead son of Mrs. Benson: Martin White Benson.



After this it is perhaps almost superfluous to add the following:—On the occasion of the second sitting (January 23rd, 1900) Mrs. Benson and I were talking in my dining-room, where the séance was to be held, before the arrival of Mrs. Thompson. The dining-room opens into the hall, and the door of the dining-room happened to be slightly ajar. Neither Mrs. Benson nor I heard the bell ring or the front door open, and at the moment when the servant was opening the door in order to show Mrs. Thompson into the room, I addressed Mrs. Benson by name. A few seconds, however, elapsed before Mrs. Thompson entered the room. I do not think that she could have normally heard me utter the name, but hyperæsthetic audition cannot, of course, be excluded.

My carelessness having thus twice provided Mrs. Thompson with a possible clue to the identity of her sitter, and that sitter happening to be the widow of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, and herself a well-known woman, and also Mr. Arthur Benson's *Life* of the Archbishop having appeared before the first sitting took place, I need scarcely say that it is practically impossible to treat any statements made by the medium in trance relating to the past history of Mrs. Benson and her family as evidence for supernormal faculty. Yet I cannot regret that these sittings were continued, for not only did they furnish some points of great psychological interest, referred to in previous sections, but also some exceptionally good evidence for supernormal faculty. This latter I propose to give in detail, not only for its intrinsic interest, but also in order to forestall what might under the peculiar circumstances be a natural conclusion, namely, that normal causes would suffice to explain *all* the phenomena of Mrs. Benson's sittings.

I fully appreciate how vexatious it must be to mediums "when," as Mrs. Thompson has herself expressed it, (see the *Journal*, S.P.R. for November, 1901) "statements made by them in trance have been deprived of their proper evidential value through laxity in the conditions."

Yet at the same time I would add in self-defence that I doubt if any one can realise without prolonged experience how difficult a matter it is to guard against each and every possible kind of laxity in the conditions of a séance, and how easy it may be for an experimenter or observer while fully

the alert for the less obvious sources of error to overlook the most obvious. Our insistence on the great allowance to be made for malobservation has, more than anything else, brought on us the remonstrances of Spiritualists; but such remonstrances would, I think, have been less vigorously expressed if they had but realised that it is our own personal and sad experiences which have largely contributed to our recognition of the untrustworthiness of human observation. Much attention as the work of the S.P.R. has met with from critical minds is perhaps due to a large extent to our frank recognition of our own fallibility.

*Extract from Mrs. Benson's second sitting held on  
January 23rd, 1900.*

(A sealed packet handed to the medium. Mrs. Benson writes in reference to this incident as follows:—"I gave the sealed packet, sealed by my daughter ill at the time at home, to the medium. At her wish I broke the seal and gave it her back. She unwrapped it, and as her fingers touched the tissue paper in which the brooch was, she exclaimed, 'The person who wrapped this up was ill.'")

"My daughter had taken the brooch out of a red silk-lined dressing case, and wrapped it up. When I saw it unwrapped in the medium's hand and I *mistook it* for another brooch which I myself possess, which was *not* in a rosewood box.

"The brooch belongs to my daughter. It was put together by the nurse of the whole family while she was living with my mother before I married. It contains the hair of my mother and my three brothers and myself, as well as that of a brother and sister who died as children.")

Nelly:—"Mother's brooch. This was her brooch, and belonged to more than one generation—a lady—two children died—her own hair and two dead children's hair made into a brooch.

"The lady seems to be the third generation—grandmother, mother, grand-children. Mrs. Cartwright said, 'Mother's brooch.' Some one telling me to say it was her mother's. [R.]

"The person who wrapped it up was not well when they wrapped it up. [R.] Inanition. [Great point of treatment of the invalid who wrapped up the package was to take as much nourishment as possible, unusually much for fever.] Delicate, not well at all, wants nourishment. Mrs. Cartwright used the word. I don't know."

[Nelly probably meant the word "inanition," and wished to explain her use of such a long word.]

"I feel rather sick. *She* must have felt rather sick. [R.]

"It was packed up at a very windy place. Ask the lady" [Notice the correct progression: "the person," "she," "the lady,"] "if something was banging the night before she packed it up. She was disturbed by the wind. A windy town, not London."

[Mrs. Benson comments: "The wind was so high the night before my daughter packed it up that for the first time during a fortnight's illness the shutters were barred all the night. N.B.—I did not know this at the time of séance. It was not a town."]

"The lady that has this brooch was next generation. There was a work-box—rosewood work-box—little silk places where you keep silks and ribbons."

[Mrs. Benson writes: "Rosewood dressing case from which brooch was taken belonged to my daughter's sister's godmother. After a hunt for brooch, it was found in a drawer in the dressing case, the only one which was lined in red silk."]

"She's not ill, but just—inside her inside she's got a collection that she ought to spit away." [Lungs clearing after congestion.]

*Extract from Mrs. Benson's third sitting held on  
May 1st, 1900.*

(A sealed packet, the contents of which had been selected and packed up by Miss Benson, was then given to medium.)

*Nelly*:—"Do you understand what I mean by the brooch-lady? Mr. Myers, you can talk. Very delicate, thin lady. Seems like mother's hair; but there's a youth about that lady—younger. She never seemed to have any strength at all, like a green-house plant. All needed careful tending." (Medium undoes the packet.)

[COMMENTS FROM THIS POINT BY MISS BENSON.]

[I had previously sent a brooch to be handed to Mrs. Thompson, which she had described as "Mother's brooch." I am delicate, but not thin; the rest true. The sealed packet contained a bangle and a ring; bangle had belonged to Agnes Tait, who had worn it, and given it to me.]

"A sort of sister Edith belonging to it, and a lot more trinkets besides this. This lady only had a few." [Agnes Tait had sister Edith, and has many "more trinkets." I have "only a few."]

"There are two things here. One has been worn by the lady who sent it. [R. The bangle.] The other she hasn't worn, as if it had been lying by." [I only wore the ring once; it has been lying by.]

"Delicate, nervous; even now she isn't so strong as she ought to be. [R.] Got no appetite." [Not directly true, but I am always advised by doctors to eat as much as possible.] "Languid sort of feeling. Bracing wants to be for her. [R.] She has black and white silk in front of her dress (touching her chest)." [Black and white *chiffon*, not *silk*, on yoke.] "Brown hand lady like one that's dead." [True both of my sister and me.] "Has she got any tendency to hip disease? which lying down is a cure for. She doesn't want to be limp; ought not to be an invalid, but take sufficient rest to do her good." [Not hip disease, but have to lie down and rest.]

"Very devoted to Margaret. I'm not talking about Maggie, but Margaret. I am very devoted to Margaret. It is the dead lady which was the beginning of ring." [My name is Margaret. I am called Maggie. I don't know the previous history of the ring.]

"Bob. They all know Bob in that family. Don't like feel of it. Don't feel comfortable." [Reference to Bob unrecognised.]

*Extract from Mrs. Benson's fourth sitting held on  
May 30th, 1900.*

*Nelly*:—"I made mother tell you at twelve minutes past two. I was anxious to impress mother with some little detail that was going on." [When I arrived Mrs. Thompson was there, and said she knew I had to leave at 4.30. I was surprised, as I had no engagement till five; but it happened that a lady with whom I had lunched had said at the end of the lunch, "Do come back to tea. Do you leave Mrs. Thompson at 4.30?" So I then asked Mrs. T. when she had this conviction, and she said at 2.12, when she had looked at the clock that she might be in time; so the times corresponded. *Note by Mrs. Benson.*]

. . . "Mrs Benson darling, will you come every time, every week, every day? Never mind what Mr. Myers says. Will you come and see Mother?" [This very curious, as Mr. Myers and I had talked at Cambridge the day before on the point that it would not be right to the Society for me to go on having séances with Mrs. Thompson unless their results were useful. I quite agreed with this view. *Note by Mrs. Benson.*]

As the details of these various incidents are rather difficult to follow, I append Mrs. Benson's own account of and commentary on them:—

. . . The condition of my daughter's health is characteristically described in very unmedical language. At the time of my second sitting, January 23rd, 1900, my daughter was recovering from an attack of pneumonia, which Mrs Thompson described, speaking of the patient as my daughter. Later on, on being given a packet sealed up by my daughter, she went on describing symptoms, touching on the point that food was of much importance, and added that it was windy the night before the packet was sealed. I had not remembered this, though I must have known it; and my daughter corroborated it by the fact that her shutters were barred for the first time during a fortnight's illness. At the sitting on May 1st, 1900, in connection with another sealed packet from my daughter, she described the general state of her health, and after speaking of her as being delicate, nervous, and obliged to lie down, added she "doesn't want to be limp: ought not to be an invalid, but take sufficient rest to do her good": all of which were characteristic, as well as true, touches about my daughter's general health. She also made one or two fairly accurate statements about my daughter's dress, etc.

There are further facts, some known to me, others not known or forgotten, which still more evidently the medium could not have received through normal channels: *e.g.* that one emerald of my engagement ring had once come out; that we had kept an unnecessarily large number of old books. Two other incidents of this kind are of special interest. On May 30th, when I arrived, Mrs. Thompson told me that she had been careful to be punctual, as she knew I had to leave at 4.30. I asked her when she knew this, and she said at 2.12. I had, previously to coming up to London, had no engagement till 5 o'clock, but a lady with whom I was lunching said at the end of lunch, "Do come back to tea—do you leave Mrs. Thompson at 4.30?" "Nelly" alluded to this during the sitting. . . .

But the things of most evidential value are those concerned with matters which I myself did not know.

(1) One is the point about the shop where we got our potatoes at Winchester. I do not suppose I ever knew it, but Mrs. Thompson described it as double-fronted and served by one man and two women, adding other details unverified. I found, however, on

asking a servant who had been with us at Winchester that it stood at a corner with a window each way, and was served by one man and two women.

(2) My daughter sent up twice a sealed packet, putting in each packet things which she did not show me. I undid each packet and handed the things, wrapped up, to the medium, but did not myself see them, and should not have recognised them.

Each time Mrs. Thompson described (see above) with considerable accuracy my daughter's condition, adding the first time the details about the windy night. She then stated (making very few incorrect statements at the same time) that *the brooch* belonged to more than one generation, that my daughter was the third, that it contained the hair of a lady and of two of her children who had died; that "there was a workbox—rosewood workbox—little silk places where you keep silks and ribbons"; the truth being that the brooch contained the hair of my mother and my brothers and sister, two of whom had died as children; that it had been given to my daughter by her old nurse, who had also been our nurse; that it came out of an old rosewood box, half workbox, half dressing-case, lined with red silk, which had been given to my elder daughter by her god-mother. The brooch had never been worn; the box had passed straight to my second daughter; I could not have seen either of these things for years and had forgotten their existence.

(3) The second sealed packet contained a garnet ring and a silver bangle, given to my daughter by a friend who had a sister Edith. My daughter had worn the bangle often, though some years ago. Again I did not recognise the things, but Mrs. Thompson stated, "A sort of sister Edith belonging to it, and a lot more trinkets besides this. This lady had only a few. There are two things here: one has been worn by the lady who sent it, the other she hasn't worn—as if it had been lying by." All these points are true, except that my daughter had worn the ring *once*. •

(4) A still more curious point is that at the sitting of May 30th, 1900, Mrs. Thompson suddenly said, "Your daughter is thinking about giving a wedding present to somebody. She seems to be very careful with her money. (A little laugh.) Oh, I can see her looking at her money and thinking about the wedding present."

On returning home I found my daughter had been going very carefully over her accounts; she did not understand the allusion to the wedding present until she remembered having considered a

memorandum of a wedding present already given jointly with me, her share in which she had not yet paid.

Mrs. Benson further remarks that the facts of which she herself had no knowledge, and which the medium could not have known in any normal manner, "were perhaps more clearly given than any other, and more free from confused and inaccurate detail."

A large number of the statements about Mrs. Benson's family which it is possible to assume Mrs. Thompson could have known or learnt in a normal way were given with much confusion. We are accordingly faced with the problem: How is it that the facts which, it would appear, could not have been learnt normally, were given more clearly than the facts which were normally ascertainable? A solution is not rendered easier when we take into account that the most telling of the former class—namely, the statements made when the medium was handed the two sealed packets—were given definitely in connection with certain objects, and were particularly relevant to the past history of the objects themselves, or to their past or present owners; whereas the latter class of facts, as often as not, were not given in connection with any particular objects, but were scattered over ten sittings, at six of which Mrs. Benson herself was not present, and when no object connected with her was in the room.

Mrs. Benson has expressed, in a letter addressed to Sir Oliver Lodge, the effect produced on her by her sittings with Mrs. Thompson. I am glad to be able to reproduce this letter here, because it embodies the opinion of a keen observer, and also because it gives expression to a view of Mrs. Thompson upon which in my opinion too much emphasis cannot be placed: namely, her abnormal power of normal observation, if I may so express it. Mrs. Benson seems to limit this exaggerated perceptive faculty to Mrs. Thompson's trance-state, but that may be due to a concise style of writing. Anyhow I would put no such limitation on Mrs. Thompson's powers of observation. "A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," "sharp as a needle," "'cute as nails," "see through a brick wall": all such proverbialisms I would apply without hesitation to Mrs. Thompson in her normal state, and with a few exceptions, where Nelly has not accepted the broadest of hints,

to her trance-state. Women are proverbially swift at seizing what the duller man would treat as impalpable indications; but after making every allowance for her sex, I still think that Mrs. Thompson displays this perceptive faculty in a superlative degree. At the same time I do *not* think however highly developed her normal powers of observation and inference may be that they will explain all her phenomena. I most emphatically disclaim any such assertion, but I do maintain that a very large discount must be made before any of her phenomena are attributed to *supernormal* faculty.

I cannot help wondering whether this peculiarity of Mrs. Thompson may not be typical of mediums in general. It has not been noted, and is, I believe, markedly absent in the case of Mrs. Piper; but that does not necessarily negative my suggestion. This heightened power of normal observation, which Mrs. Thompson displays both in and out of trance, may in Mrs. Piper's case be confined to her entranced state; and if this is the case, it would be only one more indication of the complete dis severance of the normal from the trance consciousness of Mrs. Piper, and of the lack of any such hard and fast cleavage in the case of Mrs. Thompson. Yet fundamentally the mental process in either case may be identical, although the occasion of its display may not be.

Mrs. Benson, writing privately to Sir Oliver Lodge in answer to some questions, says:—

“October 28th [1903].

“... I should like to explain a little my position toward Mrs. Thompson. I enjoyed the sittings with her extremely, and certainly had some very interesting experiences—especially one of clairvoyance at the last sitting. But nothing occurred which tended to alter the view with which I began the sittings—that the phenomena did not need to be accounted for by an external intelligence.

“I told Mr. Myers this from the first, and it almost seemed to me towards the end of the sittings that Mrs. Thompson herself tended to drop the ‘Nelly’ theory.<sup>1</sup> As you say, we had many interesting

<sup>1</sup> I understand that Mrs. Benson's meaning is not that Mrs. Thompson in her normal state was disposed to drop the ‘Nelly’ theory, but that in the later sittings Nelly retreated more or more into the background, and the medium tended to act as her own spokesman without a go-between. I myself have observed no such tendency; though Nelly is ready enough at any time to suggest or admit that her information may have been derived from her



things; but none of them were accompanied by any of the fine shades and nuances of which you speak—*nothing* occurred which led me to feel that vivid touch of personality which is the touch of all recognition—wherever she strayed beyond my ken, it was always wildly inappropriate. Her power seemed to me to lie in telepathic grasp—with me, and also with my daughter whom she had never seen, and whom I had never called by that name.

"I always thought she was in good faith, as far as her will and consciousness were concerned, but more and more I felt that the psychical part of her was so much more developed than any other that she perceived *indications* almost as a highly-trained animal does, far beyond and outside the regions I had access to—and in this subliminal consciousness a certain amount of *acting* might go on, for which one could not hold her responsible, but which required to be met by *extreme* carefulness. Therefore the fact of having supplied her most unfortunately at the very beginning with a considerable clue which her subliminal could follow out with extraordinary cleverness, seems to me to nullify the trustworthiness of her abnormal powers to a very great degree.

"I should value more than I can say some more sittings with her, because I should like to try some safeguards that I had in my mind after the last sitting. I know that this is extremely improbable, but I only say it to show you how far removed I am from doubting her *supraliminal* good faith."

The second case involving "suspicious circumstances" is rather complicated, and as I am compelled to conceal the identity of

mother's brain. The normal Mrs. Thompson has an equally open mind with regard to the source of her trance-utterances, and holds no passionate conviction as to the nature of the Nelly control. When Mrs. Piper expressed an opinion about her own phenomena it was generally agreed that she was one of the last persons qualified to form an estimate of her own case. I would not go as far as this in the case of Mrs. Thompson, for not only has she a clear grasp of some of the problems involved, but in view of the fact that complete amnesia does not always follow her trance, and that she has psychical experiences of an apparently supernormal kind without lapsing from ordinary consciousness, her subjective feelings ought not to be entirely disregarded. Yet I find that Mrs. Thompson's opinion about her familiar control fluctuates; at one time she seems overborne by a conviction of the separate existence of Nelly, and at another half disposed to think that Nelly is no more than her own subliminal: a state of indecision faithfully reflected in my own mind, though I sometimes incline towards a third alternative: namely, that Nelly is "a bit of both."

the persons concerned by adopting pseudonyms, and by substituting fictitious though analogous details for the real ones, the difficulty of clear exposition is rendered all the harder. In making these necessary changes I have been most careful to avoid selecting analogies which might allow a more favourable construction to be placed on the incident than the original record warrants, and in one instance from inability to hit upon a completely representative parallel I have adopted one which does not give Mrs. Thompson the benefit of the doubt.

I was aware that Mrs. Thompson was well acquainted with the relations and history of a certain individual whom I shall call Mr. Wilfred Strong. It accordingly occurred to me that an interesting experiment would be to bring as a sitter to Mrs. Thompson some intimate friend of the dead man, if one could be found who, as far as could be ascertained after careful enquiry, should be entirely unknown to the medium; the object of the experiment being to see whether appropriate communications would be given, and, if so, how such knowledge of Mr. Strong as might be shown by Mrs. Thompson in trance would compare with knowledge which I knew, or had reason to suppose that Mrs. Thompson normally possessed about him. I knew at the time that under no circumstances would it be possible to publish for evidential purposes whatever might be the results of the sitting, and I tried it solely for my own edification.

It may seem in now citing the results of this sitting under the heading 'suspicious circumstances' to lay myself open to a charge of taking a mean advantage of a lady who was deserving of considerate and fair dealing. As a matter of fact I had at the time of the séance no insidious intentions. It must be understood that the carelessness of the conditions which obtained at this sitting is not typical of the conditions of the other sittings where *evidential* phenomena were sought. The laxity was not precisely intentional, but the séance was allowed to become rather a 'go as you please' affair, as unless Mr. Strong's identity was discovered by the medium the chief object of the experiment would not have been attained.

So far as I could then ascertain—and nothing has occurred since to modify my opinion—the sitter whom I selected, and

whom I shall call Miss Gordon, satisfied in every respect the requirements of the case.

To the sitting Miss Gordon brought three objects connected with Mr. Strong: (a) A single sheet of notepaper, on which were eleven words in Mr. Strong's handwriting. No proper name was on the sheet of paper. The words were these:—"From the conductor to his little fairy god-sister. September — 189—."

(b) A letter written by Mr. Strong to Miss Gordon, and covering four sides of notepaper. It was handed open to the medium, but folded in two: the fourth (last) page being outermost. On the lower half of the last page were the words: "off the grass, and when in doubt ask a policeman. Always your devoted brother F. Edinburgh, October 1."

(c) A half length photograph of Mr. Strong. There was no signature on the photograph, but on the back was the name and address of the photographer, "Tomlin, London and Scarborough." It was handed to the medium in a large open envelope.

In connection with object (a), which was the first to be handed to the medium, five statements were made; two of which were right, one probably right, and two probably wrong. The two right statements might have been inferred from the writing and the words on the paper. The one statement which was probably right was not very distinctive.

After making the five statements referred to above in connection with (a) Nelly asked to be given another letter "from the same brother." Mr. Strong was in reality a brother-in-law of Miss Gordon's. On the single sheet of paper (a) occurred the words, "to his little fairy god-sister." If the medium read these words she may have inferred from them that the writer was a brother of the sitter; but I think it will be admitted that such an inference is not the natural one, and that the natural inference would rather be that the term was a playful one, and that accordingly the writer and the sitter were not related.

In connection with object (b) the following statements were made, though interspersed among them were remarks addressed to other persons who were present during the early part of the *séance*:—

"Who was Frank? not quite Frank. . . . It wasn't Frank: more Francis: but that's not quite right. I'm talking of the lady's brother."

[The letter was signed "brother F." Mr. Strong's name was Wilfred; but he was usually called and signed himself Fred. The Frank and Francis are apparently guesses suggested by the letter F.]

"It says something about 'tell a policeman.' I can see policeman' written there. No, you have got to 'ask a policeman': that is what he says when he writes."

[The words "off the grass, and when in doubt ask a policeman" were on the fourth page, and it is impossible to assert that they were not within the medium's range of vision.]

A break in the trance took place at this point. During the interval the letter was hidden. On resuming the séance Nelly said:—

"I want something to hold belonging to brother Ferdy."

[Ferdy is apparently another attempt to interpret the initial F. Though Nelly seems to be making shots, the fact of her making several shots suggests that she was not satisfied with any one. I do not think that any indication was given from which the medium could have gathered that the shots were incorrect.]

In connection with object (c) twenty statements in all were made. Of these twenty statements six were right, two were probably right, and of the rest nine were wrong, one probably wrong, and two doubtful. Of the right statements two were of facts certainly known to Mrs. Thompson; one of a fact almost certainly known; one very possibly known; and two could have been, and in my opinion were, derived from the photograph handed to the medium.

Of the two statements which were probably right, one was possibly known and the other very possibly known to the medium.

Of the nine wrong statements five would have been certainly known to be wrong by the normal Mrs. Thompson. The remaining four the normal Mrs. Thompson may or may not have known to be wrong, and the same remark applies to the one probably wrong statement, and also to the two doubtful statements.

After ten statements out of the twenty had been made in connection with the photograph, Nelly asked me to go out of the room. In my absence she made only two statements that seem to be meant to apply to the photograph: one of these two was a wrong statement, and a statement which the normal Mrs. Thompson would have known to be wrong of Mr. Strong; and the other was to this effect: "I seem to get the name of Benson."

There was no connection whatever between Mrs. Benson and Miss Gordon. Mrs. Benson's first sitting had taken place two or three weeks before Miss Gordon's sitting, but this was the first mention of her name. During my absence from the room Miss Gordon thinks that Mrs. Thompson had ample opportunity for looking at the photograph while she was taking notes, and I agree with her, for after my return Nelly gave a perfectly accurate description of Mr. Strong's personal appearance, and gave the name and address of the photographer. The personal description and the name and address of the photographer I have included in the list of right statements, counting them as two.

Just as Mrs. Cartwright did in the case of Mrs. Barker's sitting of August 8th, 1900 (see *Proceedings*, Part XLIV., p. 154), and just as the medium herself did in the case of one of Mrs. Percival's sittings (see above, pp. 177-8), so here Nelly drew attention in what it is possible to regard either as an ingenuous or as a disingenuous way to the source of her information. Thus with reference to Mr. Strong's photograph, she remarked, before giving his personal description and the name and address of the photographer:—

"The photograph seems to help me more than the letter, but I will get it all distinct." . . . "Did I look at that photograph? Because I see it distinctly. No, it's the gentleman himself that I see."

It is absolutely certain that the normal Mrs. Thompson would have recognised the photograph as a portrait of Mr. Strong at the first glimpse. At the time of the sitting I thought it probable that his handwriting would equally have been known to her, but I have since had reason to alter my opinion, and I now consider that she probably had no normal *means of recognising* the identity of the writer of the letters

presented to her until the photograph came within her range of vision.

If therefore we suppose that Mrs. Thompson was not in trance at all, and deliberately looked at the portrait, it follows that she purposely introduced a relatively large proportion of what she knew to be incorrect statements about Mr. Strong. On this course, one must imagine, recommended itself to her as she was likely to divert suspicion, and one must also suppose that she suspected that a trap had been laid for her. But not only were the correct statements outnumbered by the incorrect, but excepting the personal description of Mr. Strong and the name and address of the photographer, the incorrect facts also outweighed the correct ones in definiteness. Again, if on this occasion Mrs. Thompson was shamming trance, I can only say that there was no perceptible difference between this trance and her other trances, and unless one supposes that her trance is always assumed and that consequently various observers, such as Mr. Myers, Dr. van Eeden, Mrs. Verrall, Mr. "Wilson" and others, have been misled into thinking that Mrs. Thompson in trance displays knowledge that she could not normally have possessed, it must follow that Mrs. Thompson can imitate knowingly and unconsciously her genuine unconscious trance.

At the time I regarded this sitting of Miss Gordon's as suspicious, but I was even then inclined, and I am now, to return a verdict of "Not proven." There is absolutely no proof of fraud; that is the one positive statement that can be made with confidence about the matter. My own belief now is that Mrs. Thompson was in trance, and that the trance-personality saw the words written on the paper which was first handed to the medium, saw the lower half of the fourth page of the letter, and saw the photograph. Mrs. Thompson uses her normal faculties during trance: she can get her handkerchief out of her skirt pocket (a sufficiently complicated business requiring skill and concentration, if one may judge from the manœuvres which this act demands in the case of other ladies); I have seen her get up in the middle of a trance and open the door when some one knocked; I have seen her search about for a pencil with which to write, and generally behave like a person with most of his faculties about him. I therefore find nothing incongruous in her using her eye-

sight to read writing and to look at a photograph. The whole question resolves itself into this: Does Mrs. Thompson, in addition to exercising her normal senses, display such knowledge as to compel belief in her possession of supernormal faculty? The problem is not: Does Mrs. Thompson ever exercise her normal faculties when in trance?

There is one small point which goes in favour of the trance having been genuine on this occasion.

The paper first handed to the medium contained the words:—"From the conductor." After the photograph had been in the medium's hands a long time Nelly speaking of the one man with whom she connected all three objects said:—

"The young gentleman was very musical. I want to play the piano and compose as I go on; because he would rather do that than play other people's music." Mr. Strong was not musical, did not play the piano, and consequently did not improvise. Nelly seems to have inferred from the word "conductor" that Mr. Strong was a musician: an inference quite in keeping with Nelly's style. As a matter of fact the word conductor had no musical significance. I believe that Mrs. Thompson would almost certainly have known if Mr. Strong had had musical abilities.

As has already been remarked, Nelly's utterances were not confined to Miss Gordon, but she addressed remarks to two other people who were present at the beginning of the sitting, and she also described one of her "peregrinations." The peregrination in question was not one of the most striking: yet it has a certain value as forming one of a series in which none were entirely unsuccessful. Nor are the remarks addressed to the two other sitters particularly striking, yet one of them is rather good, and if it is not to be explained as due to normal knowledge or to chance, it introduces a further obstacle against believing that the trance was fraudulently assumed; for it is almost impossible to suppose that Mrs. Thompson goes hopping into and out of trance, and is at one moment genuine and the next not.

To one of the sitters, Mrs. Z., Nelly said:—

"What is this old Theodore doing? He wants to help you. You're very sorry in your heart about something I won't say before all these people.

*Mrs. Z.* :—"Yes, you may."

*Nelly* :—"Old Theodore wants to help: not young Theodore. You want to go somewhere. He says you are to go."

*Mrs. Z.* :—"Who was old Theodore?"

*Nelly* :—"He was an old gentleman, when you were young. I think he was a doctor. He was very much mixed up in bringing you up."

With regard to this statement *Mrs. Z.* wrote:—"About two years ago I knew a "young Theodore." His father who had been dead some little time I had never known. He was a doctor of letters and master of a well-known college. This is interesting to me, though there is a wrong statement here and there."

Recently *Mrs. Z.* wrote me as follows:—"I think—as much as one can be certain of anything where human minds are concerned—I can safely say positively that *Mrs. Thompson* could not have discovered by normal means the incident of 'Theodore.' 'Theodore's' father's name was also 'Theodore.'"

At this point in the sitting *Nelly* was speaking so rapidly, and changing the subject so frequently, that I was unable to record all she said. *Mrs. Z.* thinks that another correct statement was made about "young Theodore," which has not been noted.

In the sittings under review, and in *Mrs. Verrall's* sittings, the name Theodore has only twice been mentioned by *Nelly*, and so far as I am aware it has not been mentioned in other sittings. *Nelly* rightly connected a Theodore with *Mrs. Verrall*, and here she rightly connects two Theodores—a father and a son—with *Mrs. Z.* Three times, then, the uncommon Christian name of Theodore is given by *Nelly*, and each time hits the mark. *Mrs. Verrall's* Theodore is not the same person as either of *Mrs. Z.'s* Theodores, nor a member of the same family.

A few days after this sitting I again handed the letter (b) to *Mrs. Thompson* when in trance. *Mrs. Sidgwick* and my wife were present. I placed the open letter in a plain envelope under a thick cloak which *Mrs. Sidgwick* held tightly over *Mrs. Thompson's* lap. The medium was allowed to finger the letter, but it was quite impossible for her to have read a single word of it. *Nelly* at once recognised the letter, a feat



demanding no great acuteness. I think anybody could, under the circumstances, have recognised it by the shape, size, folding and feel of the paper.

Nelly then said:—"It has been in a good many hands, I believe. Have you got the photo belonging to this? I had this once before. Put 'policeman' down. 'When you're in doubt ask a policeman.'"

An apparent reference is then made to Mr. Strong's death, and after going off on another tack suggested, it would seem, by the initial "F," with which the letter was signed, Nelly said:—"Fred. I shan't say it till I'm obliged. [This was the first time that Mr. Strong's nickname was correctly given.] Something makes me say Derby, not the town, but there's a Derby association with this letter, rather like a peer, but not quite that." Then followed a statement which, if referred to Mr. Strong, was sufficiently, though not absolutely accurate, and it was said that "belonging to 'Fred's' relations was a Walter—Walter Stanley, or Stanley Walter."

Now with regard to these statements, there are three points to notice which, though I do not pretend that they tell strongly yet, tell somewhat in favour of the genuineness of the phenomena.

(1) "When you're in doubt ask a policeman." At the former sitting when the letter was within the range of vision of the medium, these words were given as: "tell a policeman."

. . . No, you have got to "ask a policeman." At this sitting when the letter was not within the medium's range of vision, the original phrase as it occurred in the letter—"when in doubt ask a policeman"—is given with the addition of the word "you're." One might have expected that the full phrase would have been quoted when the letter could have been seen by the medium, and that when she had to rely on her memory only the shorter form would have been given.

(2) There was a "Derby association" with the letter, for the envelope that had originally contained it, but which had not been within Mrs. Thompson's range of vision at either sitting, bore an address in which the word Derby occurred, not as the name of the town, but as the name of the Terrace *in which Miss Gordon had at one time resided.*

(3) Neither Walter Stanley nor Stanley Walter was a relation of Mr. Strong, but he had had a great friend of the surname Stanley, though the Christian name was not Walter. The family name of the Earl of Derby is Stanley, and Nelly would seem to have been put on the track of this fact by means of this association of ideas.

(17) **MARKED FAILURES IN THE CASE OF SITTERS WITH WHOM  
MRS. THOMPSON WAS PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED.**

In five cases I was completely and beyond all possible manner of doubt satisfied that the medium could not by normal means have been acquainted with the identity of the sitters. In two of these cases—those of “Mr. Wilson” and Dr. van Eeden—the sittings were successful. In the three other cases the results were very poor: but in two out of these three there were circumstances which may, in my opinion, have been unfavourable to success, and possibly also in the third.

I must not be understood to imply that in other cases I think that Mrs. Thompson knew who her sitters were, but only that I do not feel the same absolute assurance to the contrary.

But one of the most remarkable facts about the mediumship of Mrs. Thompson, so far as it has come under my observation, is her failure to give successful sittings to people about whom she must have known a good deal, and about whom she could have worked up more, and about whom her enlarged consciousness ought to have been able to tell even more still.

In the first place there were my own sittings. With certain exceptions, dealt with on pp. 116-119, hardly one single fact which Mrs. Thompson did know, or could have been supposed to know about me and my belongings, was given in the trance: and the true facts which were given related almost entirely to my mother, who died twenty years before I met Mrs. Thomp-

son; and of these facts she could not, I believe, have got up by enquiry a single one; and some of them she could not have learnt from myself, as I did not know them. And further, the communications were connected with a period of my mother's life about which I had only vague knowledge, and generally with matters which were not occupying my conscious thoughts, until my mind was by reason of the trance-utterances naturally directed thereto. The things which I consciously was thinking about were not even touched on.

It is rather Irish to class Mrs. Thompson's success in my case under the head of failures, but I do so in order to direct attention to her avoidance of topics which were within her normal range of knowledge.

My wife, who shared a sitting with Mrs. Sidgwick, was told hardly one single relevant fact; indeed, I am not sure that there was one. Naturally it would have been perfectly easy for Mrs. Thompson to have got up plenty of information about my wife. Instead of there being the very slightest trace of her having done so, there was not even any reproduction of what was normally known to her.

Just the same occurred with Mrs. Sidgwick, except that there was one reference to a relation of hers whom Mrs. Thompson has met.

In the joint sitting at which Mrs. Sidgwick and my wife were present, there is not a single statement which can with confidence be said to be right, and such as had possibly some significance are the sort of things which would be likely to have some significance for nine people out of ten. Nelly opened the trance with the remark: "I'm not going to be good to-day. Mother's body doesn't feel clear and clean"; and she certainly fulfilled *that* prediction.

Dr. Tuckey also had a bad sitting, though not quite so bad as the one just mentioned, for one fact was mentioned by Nelly in the course of it which Dr. Tuckey ultimately found was true, though at the time he stated that it was wrong; and one other fact was stated of a relation of his which though marked by himself as incorrect, I have from personal observation subsequently discovered to be true.

Only one fact was asserted of Dr. Tuckey himself, and that was to the effect that he had "drawing cords in his inside":

whatever that may mean; and when Nelly said that a clergyman was associated with Dr. Tuckey's father (from whom the communications purported to come), she was careful to add that though she had mentioned the clergyman it was not because before the trance Dr. Tuckey had spoken about a brother of his who is in Holy Orders: in other words, she drew attention to the fact that the allusion to a clergyman must not be considered evidential.

The fact noted as wrong at the time which was verified three months later was this:

*Nelly*:—"I want to say a lot of things. Something about chloroform, not giving it but taking it. . . . It was a sensation of the gentleman associated with this (*i.e.* a wooden stethoscope that had belonged to Dr. Tuckey's father) having chloroformed himself."

More than three months after the sitting Dr. Tuckey wrote to me to say that he had recollected that at one time his father was in the habit of taking a drachm of chloroform to induce sleep, and that his sister remembered that her father discontinued the habit at her "earnest solicitation."

The other statement which Dr. Tuckey dismissed as wrong, and which I afterwards verified as correct, was to this effect:—

"Somebody belonging to the old gentleman (*i.e.* Dr. Tuckey's father) who has a nervous twitch in the left eye: now and then, not always."

I do not of course maintain that two such hits as these are beyond chance, especially as they were isolated hits among a good many misses; but either on the hypothesis of fraud or of what I would term the selective-contesserative-telepathy theory, it is hard to explain why something better than this was not produced.

And the same remarks would apply to the sitting of December 20th, 1900, to which Mrs. Benson brought objects that had belonged to her dead brother, Professor Sidgwick.

(18) CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN THE TRANCE-UTTERANCES  
AND SCRIPT OF MRS. THOMPSON AND THOSE OF OTHER MEDIUMS.

Under the "Peregrinations of Nelly," reference has been made to two instances where Nelly has claimed to have influenced the phenomena of two other mediums: Mrs. Piper and "Miss Rawson." In one case the claim was not substantiated, in the other there was an undoubted correspondence. These incidents were treated as peregrinations because Nelly professed to have visited and directly controlled the mediums; but there are a few other instances of apparent concordance between the trance-utterances of Mrs. Thompson and those of Miss Rawson and the automatic writing of the lady whom I call Mrs. Scott, of which the *prima facie* explanation is either that Mrs. Thompson in trance becomes aware of the content of their automatic speech or script, or that one and the same control has conveyed similar communications through two different mediums. No "psychical excursion" on the part of Nelly seems involved. So far was I (except in one case) from suspecting that these correspondences had occurred, that it was more or less by accident that I discovered them in the summer and autumn of 1903.

Of Miss Rawson's trance-utterances no adequate record has unfortunately been kept. Miss Rawson is not a professional medium, nor has she consented, like Mrs. Thompson, to submit her phenomena to any strict investigation. She sits only with a small circle of relations and intimate friends, and as the members of this circle have long been convinced of the extramundane source of her communications, the records of her utterances have been made more for edification than for a scientific purpose; and as the séances were held in the dark, still further allowance must be made for the deficiencies of the records.

Mrs. Scott is a member of the Society who has for some years past done a good deal of automatic writing, and between her script and Mrs. Verrall's there have been some interesting and fairly numerous correspondences. I am very glad to say that she is now keeping a careful record of what she writes,

but at the time that the correspondences occurred between her script and Nelly's utterances she was not sufficiently confident of her powers, nor sufficiently alive to the value of her phenomena to trouble about noting them systematically.

I give first some similar trance-utterances by Miss Rawson, who was then in the south of France, and Mrs. Thompson.

MISS RAWSON.

(1) *Dec. 22, 1900.*

*A control speaking for and of  
H. Sidgwick:*

"He knows his wife is preparing memorials."

*Jan. 11, 1901.*

*(H. S. controlling directly.)*

"Tell my friend Myers to tell my wife not to put in the whole of the last chapters of the book she is finishing. She will know the passages she feels doubtful about. Tell him it is really I who am here."

(2) *Jan. 23, 1901.*

*H. S. controlling directly:*

"I have not seen my dear friend Myers yet, but I am more thankful than I can say that he has come here. The circle above has been waiting for him, and will with great joy welcome him."

MRS. THOMPSON.

(1) *Jan. 11, 1901.*

*Mr. D. control speaking of H.  
Sidgwick:*

"He says: 'Eleanor might remember, because she.' . . . He . . . Eleanor's writing his Life. He doesn't want her to make him 'a glorious personage.' You're to give her that message. He said: 'Eleanor has gone abroad to prepare my Life.'"

*Before the Mr. D. control spoke, a control that purported to be Henry Sidgwick had appeared for the first time.*

(2) *Jan. 21, 1901.*

*H. S. controlling directly:*

"He's (i.e. F. W. H. Myers) not with me. He's not within range at all."

*Written during séance: H. S. script:*

"I don't think Myers is here, or we should see him before the 8th, as E. G. told me [Mr. D.] was waiting for him."

*Written by Mrs. Thompson the same day some hours after the séance: (H. S. script):*

"Myers is elsewhere, I think. Should I find him here, I will turn up on the Thursday afternoon."

(3) Jan. 26, 1901.

*A control speaking of F. W. H.*

*Myers :*

"He has sent a message to the other side (Mrs. T.) but came here himself."

[The notes of the sitting give the words, "Mrs. T.," meaning Mrs. Thompson, in brackets: in explanation, as the recorder informed me, of the phrase, "the other side."

Before these words were spoken, a *soi-disant* Myers control had communicated.]

(3) Jan. 29, 1901.

*H. S. script written during seance :*

"Fred knows and helps. H. S. Yes, but why did you tell Myers H. Sidgwick he isn't here."

*Nelly :—*"I haven't seen Mr. Myers. I haven't, really. Professor Sidgwick says he has seen him : but I haven't."

*H. S. script, written Jan. 30, 1901 :*

"Myers North must be here again on Thursday. He will not now change may be opening am inclined to say so. Myers says certainly go. Myers says better go, go out of town. Not now, not now, the day not here."

H. S. [scrawl].

F. W. H. MYERS.

Two points should be borne in mind in comparing these extracts: the first that the three sittings of January 11th, 21st, and 29th, 1901, from which the extracts have been taken, were the only sittings given by Mrs. Thompson during the period of eighteen days covered by these dates, and those of January 11th, 23rd, and 26th, 1901, were the only sittings of Miss Rawson between January 11th and 29th. In other words, these sittings have not been selected from two series of a dozen or more sittings.

The second point is that the extracts from the scanty records of Miss Rawson's sittings do not represent, as might be thought, an infinitesimal portion of a large number of utterances purporting to come from the late Professor Sidgwick. The records, as I say, are scanty, and more may have been said by the Sidgwick control, and by other controls about him, than has been preserved; but the extracts quoted above represent a considerable proportion of the total record. Thus the passage quoted from Miss Rawson's trance-utterances of January 11th constitutes the *whole* record of this sitting, with the exception of two lines, which state that a regular

control of Miss Rawson's introduced the Sidgwick control with these words:—"The spirit of an elderly man is here, very anxious to speak." Again, the passage quoted from the sitting of January 23rd, constitutes all the record of Miss Rawson's trance-utterances on this date, except seven lines, in which in reply to a question from the sitters, the Sidgwick control explains what the functions of the "circle above" are. Miss Rawson's séance on January 26th, began with direct speech from a Myers control, which consisted entirely of non-evidential matter, and then followed a few words from another control, who spoke about Mr. Myers. Nothing in the utterance of either control contains any verifiable statement, except the part which I have quoted.

I cannot state with confidence whether the sitting of December 22nd, 1900, contained the first reference in Miss Rawson's trance-utterances to Professor Sidgwick, but I am informed by the recorder (a member of the Society well known to me, whose name I do not reveal, only because in so doing I should disclose the identity of Miss Rawson to many people) that January 11th, 1901, was the occasion of the first appearance of a direct Sidgwick control: a control, he tells me, extraordinary life-like.

It will be remembered that Mrs. Benson had been invited to a sitting with Mrs. Thompson on December 20th, 1900, with a view to attracting communications from or about Mr. Sidgwick; but his name was not even mentioned, and practically not a single statement was made in connection with objects that had belonged to him which can be unhesitatingly set down as relevant. On any theory of the phenomena this silence seems strange, nor was the silence broken, so far as Mrs. Thompson's trance-utterances are concerned, until January 11th, 1901 (although there had been sittings on January 1st, 3rd, and 8th), except that at sittings previous to December 20th, 1900, at which Mr. Myers was present, a few passing references to Mr. Sidgwick of an unverifiable nature had been made by one of the controls to the effect, for example, that he was quick at learning the "language of the other side," and that he soon would be able to communicate. Even if we suppose that the delay in the appearance of the control was due to Mrs. Thompson's secondary self not feeling confident of



having worked up a sufficiently plausible personation, and that the reference to Mr. Sidgwick by Miss Rawson in trance on December 22nd, was due to Mr. Myers having told her of what had been said about him at Mrs. Thompson's sittings, there yet remains to explain not only the coincidence between the statements of the two mediums on January 11th, 1901, but also the fact that a Sidgwick control manifested itself on the same day, January 11th, 1901, during the trance of Mrs. Thompson in London and during the trance of Miss Rawson in the South of France, and that up to a given point of time, namely January 11th, 1901, *messages* only purported to come from Mr. Sidgwick, to be followed by the simultaneous development of a direct Sidgwick control through both mediums. There does not appear to be much significance in the content of the messages. The fact of Mrs. Sidgwick having gone abroad was probably known to both ladies. She was not, however, then engaged on a *Life* of her husband, but was getting ready for publication some of his posthumous works. Still, she had had under consideration the eventual preparation of a *Life*. Moreover, though the references to the writing of the *Life* are not in themselves evidential, the independent reference to the same subject in the trance-utterance of two mediums on the same day is not without interest. In Miss Rawson's case it appears to have been, if not the only, at any rate the chief subject of the trance-utterance. In the case of Mrs. Thompson the utterance of the direct Sidgwick control was confined to answering questions put by myself; but Mr. D., who followed the Sidgwick control, conveyed two messages which he gave me to understand were *volunteered* by the *soi-disant* Henry Sidgwick; namely the one quoted above about "Eleanor's writing his *Life*," and another to this effect: "He wants to know if Robin has gone with Eleanor—his wife, you know"; "gone" meaning obviously "gone abroad." Of the two *volunteered* messages, therefore, one was directly and the other indirectly concerned with the same subject as was the only recorded utterance of the Sidgwick control through Miss Rawson. If the utterances of these two mediums are only the outcome of self-suggestion, I find it difficult to understand what prompted them both to hit on this particular topic, a *topic* which, so far as I can judge, was not very likely to

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commented itself to either, whether from an evidential, an emotional, or a dramatic point of view.

The coincidence between the extracts from the sittings of January 21st and of January 23rd is plain. As Miss Rawson's sitting on January 23rd was the first after Mrs. Thompson's on January 21st, it will be seen that the same spirit takes the earliest opportunity to repeat through a second medium a statement very similar to that already made through a first.

In my transcript of the Sidgwick script I have put a query against the word "waiting": but I may remark that I had thus deciphered the word more than three years before I saw or knew of the existence of the notes of Miss Rawson's sittings. Such coincidence then as there may be I have not manufactured; nor has the recorder of Miss Rawson's utterances, for he had not seen my record until I saw his. The expression "the circle above" strikes one as odd; but Mr. Myers used to refer to Mr. D., Mr. Gurney, and others as "the governing group" in Mrs. Thompson's case, and in this group Mr. D. played a prominent rôle; so if we take "the circle above" as an equivalent to "the governing group," there is a correspondence between the two statements: "The circle above has been waiting for him" and "Mr. D. was waiting for him." But I do not really think that between these two phrases there is a real agreement. The natural meaning of the "circle above has been waiting for him, and will with great joy welcome him" is that "the circle above, of which I, Henry Sidgwick, am one, has been and still is waiting to greet Myers"; whereas "Mr. D. was waiting for him" implies that Mr. D. is no longer waiting because he has now met him.

With regard to the correspondence between the utterances and script of January 26th, 1901, and those of January 29th and 30th, 1901, I would observe: that, though the statement made by the Sidgwick control through Miss Rawson, "He (*i.e.* Myers) *has* sent a message to the other side (*i.e.* Mrs. Thompson)" is not strictly borne out by the facts, it can be reconciled with the facts in a natural way.

Thus, one of Miss Rawson's controls on January 26th, says that Mr. Myers "*has* sent a message to Mrs. Thompson." No message purporting to come from Mr. Myers was, however, given through Mrs. Thompson till January 29th; but he it observed

January 29th was the first occasion after January 21st (and therefore also after January 26th) on which Mrs. Thompson went into trance. Mr. Sidgwick may therefore be supposed to have seized on January 29th the first opportunity to deliver a message given him by Mr. Myers before January 26th; the control of Miss Rawson, in speaking of the message as having been sent, may be supposed either to have meant only that Mr. Myers had then on January 26th entrusted a message to Mr. Sidgwick for future delivery and not to have meant to state positively that it had been delivered: or this control may, unaware of no opportunity having occurred for the delivery of the message through Mrs. Thompson, be supposed to have taken the will for the deed and concluded that the message had already been delivered.

The utterances most closely resembling one another are those given on January 11th. Besides this it is difficult to see what common train of phantasy could have led two mediums to agree in confining their references to one spirit (Mr. Sidgwick) to messages about and from him from other spirits for more than four months after his death, and then to agree in representing this spirit as directly controlling them on one and the same day; whereas they let a *post-mortem* interval of but 9 days in one case and 13 days in another elapse before another spirit (Mr. Myers) communicates directly: (for the signature F. W. H. Myers in Mrs. Thompson's script of January 30th must be regarded as intended to imply the direct personal operation of Mr. Myers).

Or, again, what led both to agree in representing that up to a certain date a spirit A. has not met a spirit B. in the spirit world, and after that led one medium (Miss Rawson) to represent B. as directly speaking, and the other (Mrs. Thompson) to state that A. has met B. and to represent B. as writing directly?

The words "Myers North, etc.," followed by the signature F. W. H. Myers, involve a contradiction, for they were undoubtedly intended to convey that Mr. Myers' consciousness was pre-occupied elsewhere (*i.e.* in the north of England), and that therefore he could not manifest then through Mrs. Thompson, and yet the next minute the signature of the absent spirit is written. Superficially, at least, there is a confusion here, yet *the case* is not unparalleled, and not inconsistent with similar

(see pp. 164-5, 244-5; and cf. p. 236) incongruities observable elsewhere in Mrs. Thompson's trance-drama—*e.g.* in the case of Nelly and Geoffrey Scott. But if I am right in my interpretation of the order in which the script of January 30th should be read, it would appear that when once the Myers' signature has been written the Sidgwick control is aware of his presence.

*Sitting of January 11th, 1901.*

*Nelly*:—"Mr. Gurney went and talked to Miss Rawson. He doesn't even mind knocking a table for her."

So far as I can discover only two references occur about this time to Edmund Gurney in the records of Miss Rawson's trance-phenomena. On December 23rd, 1900, *i.e.* nearly 3 weeks before Nelly's statement was made, one of Miss Rawson's controls said: "Gurney is here," and "Edmund Gurney is here now; he is too high to speak." On February 7th, 1901, nearly four weeks after Nelly's statement, Miss Rawson in trance saw the form of Edmund Gurney, who conversed with her by waving his hand as she repeated the letters of the alphabet, and afterwards directly controlled her. Obviously the value of such coincidence as there is depends upon whether Mrs. Thompson knew that a Gurney control occasionally manifested through Miss Rawson.

A letter which I received from Miss Rawson, dated October 20th, 1903, which was written in answer to my request for information on the points involved, makes it clear that it would not have been by any means a safe statement to make at random that a Gurney control had been manifesting through Miss Rawson, and incidentally it also makes it practically certain that Mrs. Thompson did not know that Mr. Myers had had some sittings with Miss Rawson in December, 1900 (see pp. 207-8).

Miss Rawson's letter is as follows:—

As far as I can remember, Edmund Gurney has been to us several times for many years, but *only ever* when Mr. Myers was "sitting" with us, and no notes were taken, as Mr. Myers considered everything said to him by Mr. Gurney as most confidential, and asked us never to speak about it to any one; but I know that Mr. Myers himself was absolutely satisfied. I believe the last time we ever had

anything from Mr. Gurney was in December 1900, [This is not the case, as I have seen records of sittings with Miss Rawson, in which a Gurney control appeared on two occasions, in February 1901; but it is noticeable that on each of these two occasions his utterances were confined to speaking about Mr. Myers.—J. G. P.] but I am quite unable to say when the other messages were sent. It may be we had three or four within the last ten years, but I could not be certain.

We did not know Mr. Myers would be at Valescure, as we went out there quite suddenly. . . .

I cannot remember if Edmund Gurney ever tilted the table, but I almost think so.

Standing by itself this incident would be worth little or nothing; but it must not be considered apart from the other correspondences described above and in the section on Nelly's peregrinations, and especially not apart from other coincidental statements made about Mr. Gurney at the sitting of January 11th, 1901, which I now proceed to quote.

MRS. THOMPSON AND MRS. SCOTT.

*Sitting of January 8th, 1901. Present: Mrs. Scott.*

The following was spoken by Nelly after the removal of the screen which had previously concealed the sitter.

"Geoffrey says he wrote through his mother's hand, and said he'd rather not come when you're here, Mr. Piddington. Mrs. Scott wouldn't tell you that; she wouldn't like to. (To Mrs. Scott) Mr. Piddington will excuse you."

At the close of the sitting the following was written through Mrs. Thompson by the Geoffrey Scott control:—"Yes, I was in the little room yesterday when you wrote."

These quotations show that, no matter whether the normal Mrs. Thompson knew at this time that Mrs. Scott wrote automatically, the trance-personality knew.

*Sitting of January 11th, 1901. Sitters: Mr. and Mrs. Percival.*

"Mr. Gurney did write a long message. Mrs. Scott received a long message for you from Mr. Gurney. Geoffrey did write and explain to his mother after she went home the reason why he was

vexed. . . Mr. Gurney went and talked to Miss Rawson. He doesn't even mind knocking a table for her."

*J. G. P.*:—(To Mr. D. control) "Tell Edmund Gurney I wish he'd come and give messages about people who are not sitting at the table."

*Mr. D.*:—"He's helping the —s, you see. . . ."

*J. G. P.*:—"Does E. G. know about the screen?"

*Mr. D.*:—"He doesn't understand; but I'll tell him, and he'll write."

"Mr. Gurney did write a long message. Mrs. Scott received a long message for you from Mr. Gurney. Geoffrey did write and explain to his mother after she went home the reason why he was so vexed."

On January 12th, 1901, I sent a copy of these words to Mrs. Scott, and her reply, dated January 12th [1901], was as follows:—

As you ask me, I send you a message I received purporting to come from Mr. Gurney. I had written it, of course, *before* your letter came; but I do not as a rule like speaking of any messages received in this way, as they can be of little use as evidence. Some time ago I had a very urgent message from both Mr. Gurney and my son, telling me the latter could not "sit" [*i.e.* control at a sitting] with you; but I felt it best to disregard it. I am glad I did, for it is interesting that it should have been verified in this way.

Mrs. Scott wrote to me on July 17th, 1903, as follows:

I am sorry to say that I do not keep a journal, and I have no record of the script you speak of. I wish it had more evidential value. I remember at the time thinking the message too valueless to be worth sending you, and I left it in the book I was reading until your letter came asking for it. I have only my own recollections to give you now, which, of course, are worth little; but I give them as you may have my letter written at the time [*i.e.* the letter, quoted above, of January 12th, 1901] to compare them with. I had been in London a few days before. I think you came to see me, and we had a sitting with Mrs. Thompson together—an unsuccessful one comparatively. [Mrs. Scott's recollections I can confirm.—*J. G. P.*] On the day I received the message I went out hunting, starting

early, probably about 9 A.M., and returning about 3.45.<sup>1</sup> I changed my habit and came down rather tired to the drawing-room, where I sat down by the fire with a book to wait for tea. I had a strong impulse to write almost directly, and I took a scrap of paper and tried the experiment without leaving my chair. The result was the message I sent you. Seeing that there was nothing "evidential" in it, and feeling great repugnance to sending you any suggestions about work which you must feel were an impertinence unless they were attested as coming from a source beyond myself, I slipped the paper between the pages of the book I was reading, and meant to take no further notice of it. Besides the message it was scribbled over, as almost all my script is, with half messages and words, purporting to come from my son; and was destroyed when the copy was made.

This happened *before tea*: which fixes the time as before 4.30 P.M. At 9 P.M. your letter came with the coffee after dinner. I did not date the copy, I *suppose* because I give its history in the letter I wrote enclosing it. I feel sure I must have written, because the incident impressed me. I knew the first quiet moment had been taken advantage of, and it seemed to me even more interesting than if the time had corresponded to Mrs. Thompson's trance: which it obviously did not do.

I do not know if Mrs. Thompson knew *normally* of my writing purporting to come from E. G. I do not know what Mr. Myers may have told her about me. But in one of my sittings with her she gave me in trance a long message purporting to be from E. G.; indeed she was "controlled" by him.

. . . The chief fact about the message which impressed me was that a message had purported to be for *you* (which was a new experience), and that "Nelly" had told you before it came that there would be one. ["Mr. Gurney *did*" (not *will*) "write a message" were Nelly's actual words.] Also this was a solitary experience to the best of my belief. I have not had any other message sent direct to *you*; and I had no reason to expect one.

I am leaving out of account Nelly's statement that "Geoffrey did write and explain to his mother after she went home the reason why he was so vexed," because though it appears to

<sup>1</sup> I venture to direct the attention of a certain Continental school of psychophysiologists to the fact that we produce here, in England a fox-hunting type of automatic writer. Fox-hunting must in future, I suppose, be added to their lengthy list of "notes" of degeneracy.

is true, it might easily be explained away as a guess on the part of Nelly. The sitting was bad, and the Geoffrey Scott control appeared to be vexed, and as Nelly was apparently aware that Mrs. Scott received automatic messages from her son, she might readily have surmised that he would explain the cause of his vexation to his mother.

But I cannot regard Nelly's statement, "Mr. Gurney did write a long message. Mrs. Scott received a long message from you from Mr. Gurney" as due to a lucky guess. It is true that at the time that Nelly spoke, and spoke in the past sense, the message had not been written by Mrs. Scott; but, as I have suggested in the foregoing instance, Nelly may have taken the intention for the deed, or the message may have been already "delivered," and have been lying latent in Mrs. Scott's subconsciousness until a favourable opportunity occurred for it to emerge.

Or again; it will be noticed that *after* Nelly had said that Mr. Gurney had sent a message to me through Mrs. Scott, I asked the Mr. D. control if Edmund Gurney knew about the screening of the sitter from the medium, and got the reply: "He doesn't understand; but I'll tell him and he'll write."

(I should explain here that Nelly's statement that Mr. Gurney had written me a message through Mrs. Scott did not suggest the question that I put to Mr. D. I much doubt if when I asked the question I remembered anything about Nelly's statement. At the very beginning of the sitting I had asked Nelly to fetch Edmund Gurney. I had never seen this control, and the only reason why I wanted it to appear was in order to give a message to it entrusted to me by another person.)

Now the message written by Mrs. Scott, which purported to come from Edmund Gurney for me, began in this way:—"I wish you to tell Piddington that I see his point; but there is danger of losing the light."

This reads like an answer to my question addressed to Mr. D.: "Does Edmund Gurney know about the screen?", and unless it was an answer to this question about the screen, the words have no significance for me, as I had not submitted any other point to the Gurney control. Mrs. Scott knew nothing of my having put this question, nor of my having



gone on to explain to Mr. D. my views about concealing the sitter from the medium, as I sent her, after the sitting of January 11th, 1901, only Nelly's words about Mr. Gurney and her son having written messages. Even now Mrs. Scott does not know about my question and Mr. D.'s reply.

At first sight, if the opening words of Mrs. Scott's message are taken to refer to what passed between Mr. D. and myself at the sitting of January 11th, it seems inconsistent with the view that Nelly's words can also be referred to the same message, and also to the hypothesis that Nelly may have been justified in speaking of the Gurney message in the past tense; but I think it conceivable that the script written by Mrs. Scott on January 12th, the day after the sitting, may represent an amalgam of a message received by her subconsciousness some time before Nelly's statement was made, and remaining latent, with a second message impressed on her mind after Mr. D. had said that he would tell Edmund Gurney about the screen, and that he (E. G.) would write.

I knew that Mrs. Scott did automatic writing, but I did not know that some of it was supposed to come from the late Mr. Gurney. I had never seen any of her script, and nothing was further from my thoughts than that she should send me a message purporting to come from Edmund Gurney, or any one else, for that matter.

Since January 12th, 1901, up to the present date (October 16th, 1903), Mrs. Scott has not written, or at least has not sent me, any other message addressed to me either by Edmund Gurney or any other control. The message written by Mrs. Scott on January 12th, 1901, consisted of 163 words, and, judging from the average length of Mrs. Scott's and others' automatic script, it was perhaps correctly described as a "long" message.

I have now recorded every instance<sup>1</sup> that has occurred in

<sup>1</sup>The E. H. Percival control claimed to have tried to send a message (automatically written) through his aunt, but as he at the same time said that he was aware of having failed, I have not thought it necessary to include this instance. It was true, and I believe unknown to Mrs. Thompson, that the aunt writes automatic script which purports to come from her nephew. On one other occasion Nelly arranged a test experiment! She wrote down a message and told me to keep it hidden, and said that on a certain day E. H. Percival would write the same message through his aunt. The aunt obtained a few words, but they did not tally with what Nelly had written.

a series of sittings under consideration where acquaintance has been claimed with phenomena occurring through mediums other than Mrs. Thompson, and in only one case—Elly and Elsie's visit to Mrs. Piper—is there no correspondence.

The resemblances quoted above are far from complete; they are suggestive rather than indicative of supernormal agency; yet I cannot ascribe them to chance. If they are not supernormal, I would attribute them to the minds of the automatists having developed from similar data in their common possession similar fantasies, accordant with the general trend of ideas that runs through spiritistic manifestations. It is at least I claim for them serious study, for could we be fortunate enough (and I am rather sanguine that we may be)

multiply analogous and more clinching instances of the same phenomenon, it would open up one of the most promising lines for observation, and even perhaps for experimentation.

## II.

ON CERTAIN UNUSUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL  
PHENOMENA.

BY JOHN HONEYMAN, R.S.A.

THE following account of certain hallucinations or illusions will be valuable to many psychologists, both because the appearances themselves were characterised by several unusual features, and also because the subject affected was free from any physiological or morbid condition likely to affect his natural powers of observation or his intellectual equilibrium. He was thus able to recognise the nature of the appearances and calmly to note the various points of interest in the appearances themselves and the circumstances connected with them.

The subject, whom we shall call Mr. A., was a gentleman nearly 70 years of age, whose left eye, destroyed by glaucoma about thirty years previously, was excised about three years and a half ago and whose right eye, slightly myopic, was defective. It would be interesting to know in connection with what is to follow what was the exact nature of the defect in the right eye, but various oculists of eminence, who had been consulted, differed in their opinion, and we may therefore take it that the case was somewhat complicated. The media of the eye remained perfectly clear, the extent of the field of vision was normal and remained unrestricted. The eye was defective, chiefly in the visual axis, where, within an area defined by an angle of about 30°, the sight was obscured as if by a thick mist (relative scotoma), while outside this limit the obscuration was not nearly so dense. We may add that the tension of the eye

(about 2T) was successfully kept in check and about normal by the use of eserine.

In April, 1900, Mr. A., walking on a country road, saw on his left a new rubble wall brightly illuminated by the sun, and to his amazement he saw it perfectly distinctly. He could see every separate stone and the mortar joints surrounding it, the smooth faces of the water-worn boulders, and the texture of stones broken to form a face. In particular he was struck with the frequent recurrence of broken granite stones, in which he could distinctly see the hornblend, the felspar, and the quartz and mica reflecting the sun's rays. Indeed, he thought he had never been able to see a wall so minutely before while passing it. He did seem to be passing it quite in a natural way, but presently coming to a part of the road where he knew there was no wall, but only an iron railing on a low parapet, and finding the wall still there and no railing visible, it occurred to him that he might see this wall just as well if he shut his eyes altogether, and on doing so he found this to be the case: the wall was still there, with the sun shining on it as brightly as ever.

Finding that his available sight was greatly interfered with by the intrusion of this subjective sight, he had to give up his intention of going further and return home. The wall shortly afterwards disappeared, but a great variety of other images appeared at frequent intervals throughout the day. These all showed two characteristics, brightness (amounting almost to luminosity), and distinctness—not the slightest trace of the haze affecting the natural sight being observable. The image most frequently recurring (though with infinite variations) was a surface decorated with groups of flowers. Sometimes these flowers were painted, sometimes embroidered, but in every case the minutest details were distinctly seen, even to the stitches of the embroidery. Minor changes were constantly occurring; for example, the different groups were sometimes connected with one another by cords of various designs; at first of silk, a cord would gradually change to plush, with all the colours of the rainbow shining brightly on it; then it would be transformed to gold or silver and assume the form of a serpent covered with gold scales. Then suddenly dozens of these serpents would be seen, with heads erect and jewels flashing

from their eyes. They were standing out in relief, perhaps for about a third of their length, but gradually the mouth opened wide and the eye cavity became empty, and the whole thing was seen to be merely a thin skin of metal.

In such cases the drawing of the empty head was, like everything else, perfect, and so was the perspective of the protruding coils. Sometimes these serpents were pure white with round red spots all over them at regular intervals, and at other times white with black spots, but they were never coloured "proper." Occasionally a human head gradually emerged from a flower and developed to life size, and then the rest of the picture vanished. In that case the head was perfectly natural in colour and in every other respect—it was simply impossible to distinguish it from an actual living head; it had every appearance of being substantial and tangible. After a brief interval it gradually changed; at first a perfectly proportioned and beautiful head, sometimes male and sometimes female—"never the head of any one Mr. A. had ever seen"—it began to get withered and contorted and wrinkled, and finally, as a rule, disappeared as if smothered in the innumerable frills of a cap, which kindly hid it from view.

Such appearances continued at intervals for several days, and did not recur, except on one or two isolated occasions, till June, 1901, when Mr. A. was again visited by experiences similar to those of the previous year, extending over several consecutive days. The appearances were generally similar to those already described, only the designs were frequently more elaborate and elegant, and the harmonious combinations of brilliant colours more remarkable. There was one new type of image, however, which must be noted, namely, the complete human form, which appeared repeatedly under the following circumstances.

On the first occasion, when hurrying along a quiet street towards a railway station, Mr. A. suddenly checked his pace and said to his companion, "Don't keep me so close to her, rather get in front. I was nearly on her skirt." He was told that there was no one in front of him and no woman visible at the time on the same pavement. What Mr. A. saw as distinctly as anything he had ever seen in his life

(if not more so) was the figure of a female walking closely in front of him, so that he could hardly step out without treading on her skirt. The skirt was of red cloth with groups of white lines (a broad line with two very thin lines on each side of it) crossing each other at frequent intervals, as in a tartan, and over this was a black silk jacket or short cloak. The dress was beautifully illuminated with sunlight and moved naturally in response to the motion of the figure, while the light silk jacket was occasionally lifted as if by the breeze. Mr. A. made a motion of putting the skirt out of his way with his umbrella, but of course, as he knew, there was nothing there. Having occasion to cross to the shady side of the street, Mr. A. lost sight of the figure for a few moments, but it soon reappeared right in front of him, with the sun still shining on it; but this time she had changed her skirt and wore a rich silk tartan, the prevailing colour of which was green. She was seen not very distinctly in the booking-office, and finally disappeared for the day when the platform was reached. This kind of apparition, with differences in detail, chiefly in the colour and texture of the clothing, but sometimes also in the fashion of her garments, was seen several times.

Subsequently, in November, 1902, on a return of this type of hallucination, Mr. A. noticed that the size, which was less than natural when the eye was turned towards the ground, increased as the eye was directed upwards. On this occasion the appearance of the female figure was very similar in attire, as far as the form was concerned, but entirely different in colour and texture from what it was on the first occasion; besides, when first observed, there was not one figure, as before, but three, and all of them were apparently clothed in very rich and lustrous red silk, without any white lines upon it, the tone of colour of the figure on the right being several shades darker than those on the left, and it may be added that, although the day was cloudy, the figures were lighted up by brilliant sunshine, as before. In a few minutes after observing the vision, the figure on the extreme left vanished, leaving two only, and for a time these two remained, and a change occurred on the dresses, each of them being divided perpendicularly by a difference in the tone of

the colour, one half—the half on the left—being considerably lighter than the half on the right. Shortly afterwards the colour of the dress of the figure on the left changed to a bluish-purple, and very shortly after that, that figure also vanished and there remained only one figure. After a brief interval the dress of that figure also changed somewhat, and was crossed by lines of white, dividing it into squares of about two inches each way. On that occasion, on entering the house, the other variety of images appeared with very much the same character as those already described, the groundwork of the images being apparently a very delicately-tinted purplish silk texture with a trellis-work of white lines, on which hung the groups of flowers of rich and varied colouring, and occasionally both the serpent forms with rubies for eyes, and the human heads, which, however, seemed more evanescent, changing rapidly and generally ending in grotesques.

A circumstance connected with the two kinds of hallucination exhibited in this case must be noted as very remarkable, namely, the limitation of both varieties within what can only be described as the visual field of the left eye. But this difference between the two manifestations was noticeable. In the case of the first variety, the whole visual area was occupied by the illuminated trellis-work, which had the appearance of being fixed as on a wall. In this respect the hallucinations exactly resembled images of external objects occupying the right visual field, in that they appeared stationary when the position of the field was altered. For example, if the head was turned on its axis from left to right or *vice versa*, the central subjective image would retain its position, and those to the left of it also retaining their position were successively lost as the field moved round, while to the right fresh images appeared, precisely as in ordinary circumstances objects of a similar description do, as, for example, if we look at an iron railing. In the case of the second variety, the figure always moved along with what should have been the eye. This difference—the apparent stability of the one set of subjective images and the mobility of the other—leads up quite naturally to the extraordinary phenomenon that, while the mobile figure always kept out

of A.'s reach, the apparently stationary images—the fields and fences and walls and trees in a landscape seen by A. as he travelled either slowly on foot or rapidly in a train—invariably maintained their proper relationship and perspective, changing their relative positions as the objects in a landscape appear to do. The extraordinary and apparently inexplicable thing here is that the images so acting in obedience to the laws of perspective had, in fact, no existence, except within the brain or mind of the observer. We have thus one hallucination based on another, the second being much the more wonderful of the two, as where this phenomenon was observed, there were neither green fields, walls, nor trees. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in the above connection is that, although both kinds of hallucinations were entirely independent of external things, and therefore unrestricted by any obstruction calculated to produce the usual limitation of the field, that limitation was still scrupulously respected. The one field overlapped the other, but only to the usual extent.

The first observation which the foregoing narrative suggests is that the sympathetic action of the two eyes through their innumerable nerves is not so intimate as is generally supposed; for here we have at the same instant one eye helplessly subject to hallucination and the other proof against it, and constantly retaining its objective vision. The fact that there is actually no eye in Mr. A.'s case but only the nervous mechanism of what was once an eye, seems to make it all the more likely that the sympathetic influence of the existing eye should prevail, but in effect we find that while the physiological conditions affect the sensory nerves on the right side, they have no influence on the left, either sympathetic or otherwise. If we are to assume with Professor James, that no visualisation is possible without the excitation of sensory centres in the cortex, we must, to explain the phenomena exhibited in this case, believe that there exists in connection with the eye a centre of hallucination; but no such centre has been localised by any of those who have devoted most attention to this special subject, and if it had been, it is difficult to imagine how any stimulus could be conveyed to it through the physical mechanism of an organ which had no existence. It is quite evident that



if we suppose and get to believe in the existence of such a centre, where hallucinations of all kinds in all their complicated details are manufactured and ready for use, whenever certain conditions come into play, we get rid of an immense difficulty, which, notwithstanding the patient researches of the past half century, still remains and must do so for ever—or at least till the mystery of Life is solved. In this case, even had such a hallucinatory centre existed, it is to be observed that the subjective and objective centres were entirely dissociated.

The hallucination could not possibly be suggested by anything within sight of Mr. A., or even by the memory of anything he had ever seen. What he could see at the time was only an occasional lamp-post, and a muddy street in the dull light of a rainy day. But what he saw at the same moment consisted of the delicately tinted silken robes of a female flashing in brightest sunshine.

The truth seems to be that subjective visualisation is quite independent of physical mechanism, while still in some degree affected by physical conditions. The mind cannot possibly present to itself images of things which have no existence, through the medium of the senses. Attempts to demonstrate the contrary have failed and must inevitably fail. Such manifestations are entirely spontaneous; they are the creation of the mind, and hardly a trace of suggestion is to be found. It may here be observed in passing that this would reasonably lead to the inference that hallucinations and dreams have the same ultimate cause, and are indeed practically identical phenomena, any difference being due to the interference with the ordinary evolution of perception by a state of dream consciousness.

It thus appears that not only do we find nothing in the circumstances related to suggest the existence of a hallucinatory centre, but the fact that the hallucinations observed occupying the left visual field were much more distinct than the objective images in the right field seems rather to favour the view that, whereas the form and colour of objective images are conveyed to the mind most distinctly where the brain processes are in full development and vigour, the subjective inventions of the mind are most distinctly seen where the physical conditions are quite the opposite, where the brain processes are completely

inactive. And hence we may legitimately infer that if the mind were entirely freed from its corporeal environment, it would be in the highest degree fitted for the enjoyment of hallucinations.

The most elaborate systems of nervous distribution and cerebral receptivity can never produce sight. The living mind alone can do so, using the exquisite physical mechanism at its disposal to modify or define the appearance of external objects, not intuitively but by progressive experience.

But it is quite evident that for visions of its own creation, such physical aids are not required, for without the visualisation the subjective image has no existence, and the creation and simultaneous visualisation are absolutely independent of physical apparatus, while still in a manner inexplicable, and yet influenced by physiological or pathological conditions.

This view is quite consistent with Parish's theory of dissociated consciousness so far as illusions regarding external objects are concerned, but no further. For we can quite well conceive that a current of energy, diverted from its normal course into an unusual group of distributing nerves, must lead to totally unexpected and abnormal results. This is due to the mind being misled by the abnormal action of the material apparatus, on whose fidelity it has been accustomed to rely, but in the case of hallucinations it is not a mere distortion of some object transmitted by the retina to the mind diverted from its proper course, as Parish suggests, but a distinct image visualised apparently without the aid of any physical mechanism whatever. In fact we may say that the intensity of the visuality in a case of hallucination increases just as the energy of supposed material agencies decreases in power; thus we have the dreams in ordinary sleep, and in the complete hypnotic state visions more remarkable.

Even the case before us seems to favour this, for the reason why the subjective images seen in daylight are so remarkably distinct and bright probably is that the organ of vision is entirely absent.

If as Parish admits (*Hallucinations and Illusions*; by Edmund Parish: English translation, London, Walter Scott, Ltd., p. 148) a perception is possible without an objective basis, the fact greatly strengthens the view that in the case of pure hal-

lucinations the mind takes the initiative and acts and visualises its subjective images without the intervention of the sensory system at all.<sup>1</sup>

Further, if it be granted that the elaborate researches of Binet and others, who have specially devoted themselves to the study of the mechanism of the brain, have established the fact that there exist cerebral centres communicating directly with the organs of sight, hearing, etc., by countless nerves adapted to the purpose and even that there are separate centres for the retention of every different kind of sensation, it must after all be left to the imagination to discover how the complex mechanism can be made to serve the ordinary purposes of the human intellect by any combination of physical means; for example, to enable the mind to perceive an external object, by transmitting through the retina a correct image. It could not be recognised unless the visual centre were put into immediate communication with the visual memory centre and so on.

And even if we grant that the perfect working of this physical mechanism is possible, it can hardly be so if it is in any measure thrown out of gear. In view of the infinite complexity of the nerve system suggested here, Hoppe's theory that visuality is produced by a physical substance being projected from the retina through the nerve tracks to the sensory centres of the cortex seems hardly worthy of consideration and in fact is disproved by the condition in Mr. A.'s case.

Hoppe's words are:—

“This hallucination matter, which is either hallucination itself or the raw material of hallucination, must, as it is something physical, occupy some place and this place is assigned to it in the retina itself.” (See *Hallucinations and Illusions*, by Edmund Parish, Eng. trans. p. 172.)

Now in A.'s case no retina existed, and if Hoppe's localisation be correct, no such physical substance existed either. On

<sup>1</sup> For discussions of this point, see the chapter on “Hallucinations” in *Phantasms of the Living*, (Vol. I., Chap. X.,) and the section on the “Physiology of Hallucinations” in the “Report on the Census of Hallucinations” (*Proceedings S.P.R.* Vol. X., pp. 134-148).—*Ed.*

he other hand, the more intelligible theory of Parish—the theory of dissociation—as to the cause of hallucinations appears to be inadequate and indeed inconsistent with observed facts, or if dissociation occurs through the haphazard increase or diminution of tension in certain groups of elements, the result would be, not the production of a recognisable image, but an inextricable confusion of images, and the hypothetical theory could not possibly account for the phenomena referred to towards the beginning of the narrative (p. 313 *ante*) where one hallucination apparently is superimposed on another with perfect and invariable consistency.

I have used the term hypothetical, as it seems to be appropriate in this case: and hence another reason for rejecting Parish's theory of dissociation, for stimulus cannot exist without a cause and in this case no physical cause can be found. Under normal conditions, the existing cause of visual sensations is from without, through the medium of the retina; but in this case where there is no retina the stimulus, if such exists, must obviously come from within.

The theory of sight through physical agencies is intelligible, but it must be remembered that the proper use of that agency has to be learned: it is not intuitive. But the acquisition of the power correctly to visualise a hallucination requires no such education: it is therefore intuitive—if we can use such a term, and if its use be ever legitimate it seems to be in a case such as this, because it is evident that in the case of hallucination, conception, visualisation and perception occur simultaneously. This is a distinction of considerable importance in any attempt to trace its origin.

As we have already seen, there is no evidence of any sympathetic co-operation between the right eye and the remaining nerve connections of the left. This complete absence of any evidence of sympathetic action (in connection with vision at least) must be regarded as one of the most interesting peculiarities of the case.

It is as if we had two entirely independent sides in the same individual—the visual field on the left side, when occupied at all, invariably filled with images purely subjective, while that on the right is simultaneously and invariably filled with objective images, except when under the influence

of sleep. There is one phenomenon which could not be observed except in such a case as this, where we may regard the two fields as entirely separate from each other, and that is the struggle for supremacy where the two fields overlap. Here the right side, even though abnormally dim, has invariably the best of it; external objects are seen, though faintly, through the more luminous and perfect representation of the subjective images. On no occasion has hallucination occupied the right visual field, except to the point already indicated, where it is overlapped, but not obliterated, by a part of the hallucination of the left side. It has always been possible to see external objects through the hallucination even at that point. This is another significant indication that these independent sensations spring from two totally distinct sources.

Our case undoubtedly exhibits two kinds of perception, essentially different, never showing the least tendency to combine, but each maintaining its prerogative within its own natural province, even within the limited area where the boundaries overlap. But whereas any opaque substance, such as a thin sheet of metal, held in front of the right eye put an end to the vision there, such obstruction on the left side made no difference whatever, and the vision was as bright when both eyes were shut as when open. Or, again, if the obstruction were placed in front of and with its edge on the centre of the nose, it at once cut off the images on the left section of the right visual field, but it had no effect whatever on the corresponding right section of the field; images there remained as distinct as ever, as might have been expected.

The intuitive perception of what never existed cannot be produced by any physiological process. It may possibly in some measure be modified by individual idiosyncrasies or pathological conditions, but it is a purely psychical phenomenon. Even James seems to admit that hallucinations are beyond the hitherto recognised limits of mental science; when quoting the dictum of Locke, he says:

“Locke's main doctrine remains eternally true, however hazy some of his language may have been, that, though there may be a great number of considerations wherein

things may be compared one with another, and so a multitude of relations, yet they all terminate in, and are concerned about, those simple ideas either of sensation or reflection, which I think to be the whole materials of all our knowledge. The simple ideas we receive from sensation and reflection are the boundaries of our thoughts, beyond which the mind, whatever efforts it would make, is not able to advance one jot; nor can it make any discoveries when it would pry into the nature and hidden causes of those ideas." (See *Principles of Psychology*, by William James, Vol. II., p. 6.)

It does not however follow that because mental science with Locke's limitations cannot fathom the mystery of hallucinations, the mind itself is unable to do so, or even that it cannot create what it is unable to explain. The pure, spontaneous invention would, we should think, be an easier achievement than the successful manipulation of the complicated physical machinery slightly out of gear, which Parish supposes to be at its disposal for the purpose. But as we have seen, Parish himself admits the possibility of perception without physical basis, and the experience of Mr. A. seems strongly to confirm this view.

It may here be noticed that during the existence of hallucination the will appears to be entirely inoperative, for as Mr. A. pursued his way along the lonely street with his phantom female before him, he wished with all his strength of will that she would get behind him or vanish, but she did neither till she thought proper herself and then without any conscious wish on his part. This would seem to indicate that while objective vision is subject to physical conditions, subjective vision is not only independent of these, but is also independent of at least one important element of mind, namely, the will, which was exercised in vain, either to stop hallucination or to modify it to the extent that the images seen, and especially the visages seen, should bear some resemblance to others which Mr. A. had seen before. In no instance was the wish gratified or the will otherwise able to assert itself throughout the whole series of hallucinations.

Of course one instance will not establish a fact any more than one witness, but these circumstances seem well worthy

of notice, as the opportunities for making such observations are of rare occurrence.

It may perhaps be thought that the state of matters disclosed in this case tends to confirm Professor James' theory of the duality of the mind, but a still greater than James has said that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways; and in view of the interdependence and necessary co-operation of the mind's various constituents—irrespective of sight—in the production of even one conception, even a modern psychologist may be prepared to admit that it would be impossible always to prevent conflict along the frontier line of the two provinces, and that you could not anticipate as a result an evenly balanced mind. But why stop at duality? All analogy and the whole organisation of things animate and inanimate should lead us to anticipate that the constitution of the mind should be exceedingly complex, with a variety and subtlety of detail which must for ever defy analysis and remain, like the omnipresent source of all, for ever unsearchable.

No doubt the fact that the mind, by an effort of the will and the aid of memory, can recall perceptions with such exactness that the hand may accurately portray them, although the mind remains unable to visualise them, seems rather to favour Parish's view that certain physiological conditions are necessary to account for visualisation. But on the other hand, if the mind aided by these forces cannot visualise perceptions founded on actual sensations transmitted by the ordinary channels of communication with external things, how much less can it achieve this result—the excitation of the hypothetical stimulus of the sensory nerves—without the aid of either memory or the will (which at least in some cases of hallucination appears to be dormant)! The supposition that it does, brings us face to face with the alternative that instead of the mind creating hallucinations, they are created by only one element of mind, viz., the imagination, capable of independent action and localised in a certain set of nerve centres. In short, that what we designate mind is not a distinct entity, but a complex confederation, the component parts of which, though closely related, have each, not merely a *separate* function, but also a separate habitat within the

brain's periphery. But even if we were to go this length, the impenetrable mystery of how the imagination gets hold of its various subjective images and applies the corresponding stimulus to the particular nerve track, shunting it off at the proper switch to a process of irradiation, capable of producing the desired effect, although not the course intended by the imagination;—all this, we say, would remain a mystery, unsolved and insoluble.

The most important conclusion to which the narrative related above points, appears to be that the sources from which objective vision and hallucinatory vision spring are essentially different and independent. The first is initiated by external stimuli, acting on the sensory mechanism of the brain, resulting in a definite sensation which the individual perceives, and which we call sight, while the second cannot be called a sensation, as the sensory physical apparatus cannot be influenced by what has no existence, and there appears to be no chance of the intervention of the ordinary processes of sensation, as the hallucination is not only perceived but conceived at the same instant, while the machinery of sensation is simultaneously fully occupied by objective excitations, and where there is no energy there can be no physical action. The source of hallucinatory vision therefore must be within, and must be regarded as a purely spiritual process.

NOTE.

[The following note on Mr. A.'s case has kindly been contributed by a Member of our Society and well-known oculist, Mr. J. Mackenzie Davidson, M.B., (C.M., (Aberd).]

Mr. John Honeyman's communication on certain unusual Psychological Phenomena is very interesting, the more so since the observations are so accurately recorded. The salient point that strikes one is that while the phenomena are purely subjective, yet in certain respects, *e.g.* in the change of size of the images seen, they varied as if the visual impressions had been produced by external objects.

It must be remembered that what is *seen*, in the sense of the mind forming a conception of the size, shape, and colour



of objects, is due to a variety of impulses co-ordinated to produce the final mental impression. To illustrate this there is no better way than to produce on the eyes a good after-image, —say of the incandescent filament of an electric lamp, viewed at a distance of a foot; and if then the after-image is reproduced on a screen held a foot from the eyes, the apparent size of the after-image will be exactly the same size as the original object (the filament) which produced it. But if the screen be gradually taken further away, the after-image will increase in size, and if one looks at the sky or any distant object, the image will have increased enormously. In this way the after-image can be made to appear  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long or 20 feet long according to the position of the eyeballs. In this case the impression produced on the retinae is of a fixed size and unalterable, and the impression on the centre for vision of the retinae must also be unalterable; but, and this is the point of importance, the mental conception of the actual size by the higher visual centre is modified by the position of the axes of the eyeballs, whether they are convergent or parallel.

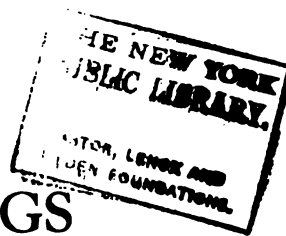
It is therefore conceivable that the phenomena recorded in Mr. Honeyman's paper may be partly explained by the position of the eyes and head, etc., for it is recorded "Mr. A. noticed that the size, which was less than natural when the eye was turned towards the ground, increased as the eye was directed upwards." This is exactly what would happen with an after-image.

JAS. MACKENZIE DAVIDSON.

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#### EDITORIAL NOTE.

It was intended to include in this Part of the *Proceedings* a review of Dr. Bramwell's recent book on *Hypnotism*, but the review which was prepared was unfortunately lost in the post. It has therefore been necessary to postpone its appearance till the next Part.



PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
Society for Psychical Research  
PART XLVIII.  
MARCH, 1904.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT. ✓

PROFESSOR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

*January 29th, 1904.*

My first duty is to thank you most heartily for the honour  
which has been conferred upon me to-day. When I recall the names  
of the illustrious men who have preceded me in this chair, I  
can only ask your indulgence for the deficiencies of which I am  
fully conscious and express the hope that our Society may not  
suffer from having chosen as its President one from a remote  
country, and who can lay no claim to the eminence of his  
predecessors.

It has not been the custom formally to move a vote of  
thanks to our out-going President, but I am sure you would  
perme me to voice the grateful appreciation, which we all  
deeply feel, of the great services which Sir Oliver Lodge has  
rendered to the Society during his three years' tenure of office.  
In his presence I cannot express all I would like to say, but  
perhaps he will permit, that during his Presidency,  
his influence and high position in the ranks of science have  
been of inestimable value to the Society, whilst his simple and  
unaffected courage has been a noble stimulus to us all.

Here too, perhaps, you will allow me to say how much we owe to the ungrudging and arduous labour of our Hon. Sec. Mr. Piddington, and to the skill and care with which our Hon. Treasurer Mr. H. A. Smith has, almost from the foundation of the Society, conducted its finances, and to the legal advice and assistance, in the incorporation of the Society and other matters, which Mr. Smith and Mr. S. C. Scott have freely given to us. Though I am quite sure they would deprecate any allusion to their services, yet I know you will join with me in expressing our most grateful and cordial thanks to each and all of these gentlemen.

This month we enter upon the 23rd year of our existence, and in spite of the irreparable losses we have suffered in the past through the removal from this life of those who seemed to be the very pillars on which the Society rested,—Gurney, Sidgwick, Myers,—losses which naturally gave rise to many gloomy forebodings—nevertheless we have no reason for despondency, on the contrary the present flourishing condition of our Society far exceeds that which even I, the most sanguine of its founders, could have anticipated. Both numerically and financially we are stronger than we have at any time been; the number of our Members and Associates throughout the United Kingdom, after eliminating all losses through death, etc., is 832; in addition we have 530 Members and Associates in the American Branch, and on the Continent kindred societies are springing up.

As you will see by the printed statement of accounts, our financial condition is also satisfactory, and we have in addition, thanks to a generous legacy, a considerable reserve fund, which we hope the liberality of our members will increase. The Council have placed this reserve fund in the hands of Trustees and have determined to appropriate the interest of it, when it reaches the sum of £8000, to the purpose of experimental research in such subjects as fall within the scope of our Society.

It is true that no original research of any value can ever be made to order. The progress of knowledge in psychical science, as elsewhere, must in the end rest upon the self-sacrificing and intelligent work of those in whom a keen interest for a particular branch of enquiry has been excited, and whose enthusiasm is not stimulated by, nor can it be repaid in, coin

of the realm. But the investigator has to live, and to enable him to do so whilst he is conducting any hopeful enquiry, sanctioned by the Council, a modest sum will be appropriated to him as a grant in aid.

We hope to receive from time to time applications from competent enquirers of either sex who will undertake special lines of investigation. It might also be desirable, though here I speak my own opinion only, to follow the examples of the older scientific societies and award medals or premiums for any good piece of original work. There is an immense field for investigation; psychical research is almost virgin ground as far as strict scientific enquiry is concerned, and though the worker is not likely in this generation to meet with much encouragement from the world at large, and still less any benefit to himself, he may be sure his toil will not be in vain. I would therefore earnestly appeal to any members or friends of our Society to give us what help they can; if personal assistance is not possible, their contributions to the completion of our research fund will be gratefully welcomed.<sup>1</sup>

And this brings me to a point to which for a moment it is desirable to refer. The work of the Society has hitherto been in comparatively few hands, and the centre of gravity of the Society inevitably falls in that place (such as Cambridge) where the most active workers are or have been found. This has led some of our members to feel perhaps a little aggrieved that the centre is not within their own precincts, that they are not more in touch with the work of the Society, and that matters of great interest may be occupying attention at headquarters and yet no information may reach them. If this represents any general feeling, is not the remedy to be found in wider and more earnest co-operation in our work on the part of the members generally? The *Journal* of the Society was established to encourage this and to be an organ of communication between the members. I should be glad to see it more freely used for this purpose, and for the speedy publication of any first-hand evidence that our members may possess;

<sup>1</sup> In consequence of this appeal two members of the Society wrote to me that they would contribute £50 each if eighteen others would do the same so as to make up £1000 in the present year; £113 3s. has since been received, and perhaps some readers may feel moved to contribute towards the completion of the sum.

and also for the prompt communication of information from headquarters which would be of interest to members generally. I hope, therefore, without any departure from the caution and reserve, which are so necessary in dealing with the phenomena that engage our attention, we may be able to have a more frequent interchange of thought and opinion between the Council and the body of our members, and I shall be glad if I can be of any service in promoting this.

As regards wider co-operation in our work, I would venture to suggest *local groups* should be formed, meeting weekly or monthly for investigation or discussion.<sup>1</sup> If you ask me what work can be done by these local groups, a beginning might be made in the determination of two problems, which though they may be simple and dull, are nevertheless of considerable importance, and which can only be settled by wide-spread assistance.

One of these problems may be stated thus:

(1) Assuming the existence of telepathy, is the transference of thought from one person to another independently of the recognised channels of sensation, a faculty in some slight degree possessed *by all*, or is it confined only to a few? Prof. Richet and others have made experiments on this question, but it is still an open one. It is very easy to devise methods of experiments between two persons, choosing the simplest form, such as tossing a coin, and noting whether the right guesses in, say every 100 trials, somewhat exceed the number which chance alone would indicate. But patience is necessary in all investigations to make the result of any value, and also precautions with which no doubt you are familiar, such as the avoidance of facial or other indications. There are other questions in connection with telepathy which need elucidation to which I will refer presently.

The other problem is:

(2) To what extent is motor-automatism common among mankind? By motor automatism is meant the purposive movement of one's voluntary muscles without any intention or conscious effort on our part. The simplest and most sensitive

<sup>1</sup> No member of the Society has done more in this direction than Colonel Taylor, R.E., and I hope his example and admirable method of investigation will be widely followed.

test is to hold a forked twig in your hand after the manner of a dowser, and see if the twig curls up of its own accord when you walk round your garden, or go in search of some hidden object. Some one or more members of your investigating circle will probably succeed, in spite of their incredulity. Now it is important to know (1st) the percentage of success among all our friends, and (2nd) whether other phenomena of motor automatism occur with the same individual, such as the movement of the pendule explorateur, automatic writing, etc., and (3rd) whether these movements are merely fortuitous, or whether they are veridical, that is to say, do they give us truth-telling information of something the individual could not have ascertained by the use of his ordinary perceptive powers?

Now these problems require the willing co-operation of a number of intelligent investigators, but they do not require costly apparatus nor any particular training beyond that of careful observation; nor are these experiments in the least injurious to the operator, nor likely to excite any opposition even from a hyper-sensitive conscience. It is true they may seem trivial and tiresome: if any person think so, I am afraid they would think the details of all scientific investigation trivial and tiresome. The work of a bricklayer or a hodman in building a house would seem to be very monotonous, if we did not regard the end in view.

I am sometimes asked what our Society has already achieved, what has it done to justify its existence? The reply to this is found in the eighteen closely printed volumes of our *Proceedings*, and the eleven volumes of our *Journal*, containing an immense mass of evidence, the record of carefully sifted observations or of stringent experiments. These form a storehouse of material which we have every reason to believe will become increasingly valuable to students both of psychology and philosophy in the not distant future. Unquestionably a change of opinion is gradually coming about through the work of our Society. The widespread and unreasoning prejudice which 25 years ago existed against all psychical enquiry is breaking down. This is seen in the list of distinguished men who have become members of our society, and here I desire to

welcome one of our great English savants, a man of European reputation, who has recently joined our ranks, and this coincidentally with his election to the high position of joint Hon. Secretary to the Royal Society.

But although there is a more open mind on the part of science towards psychical research, it must be confessed it is still looked at somewhat askance by the leaders and organs of official science. It is worth a moment's attention to consider why this should be. No one asserts that the knowledge we are seeking to obtain is unimportant, for as the learned Dr. Glanville said 200 years ago about similar subjects to those we are studying, "These things relate to our biggest interests; if established they secure some of the outworks of religion." Nor, so far as I know, does any one assert we are hasty and incautious, or unscientific in our method of investigation. No doubt one reason for the present attitude of official science towards us has been the prevalence and paralysing influence of a materialistic philosophy, which denies the possibility of mind without a material brain, or of any means of access from other minds to our mind except through the recognised channels of sensation. Both these propositions are of course denied by our religious teachers, who assert that a spiritual world does exist, and that the inspired writings were given supersensuously to man. Nevertheless as a body, though with some notable exceptions, even *they* do not welcome us with open arms. The common ground and official view of both science and religion is that all extension to our existing knowledge in their respective departments can only come through the channels recognised by each; in the one case the channel is bounded by the five senses, and in the other case it is that sanctioned by authority. We must all admit that even unconsciously authority has a large share in moulding our convictions and determining our conduct, in fact we cannot emancipate ourselves from its subtle influence. As a rule this is beneficial, unless it can be shown that authority is untrustworthy; but the attempt to prove that it is so is sure to be an ungracious and difficult task, and almost certain to bring odium to bear upon those who, if they eventually prove to be right, are in a subsequent generation hailed as benefactors of the race.

Some years ago that most learned man, the late Prof. von

Helmholtz, visited Dublin. I had then recently published a paper giving for the first time *prima facie* evidence of something new to science, called thought-transference, now known as telepathy. Helmholtz, who was a great physiologist as well as physicist, had some conversation with me on the subject, and he ended by saying: "I cannot believe it. Neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society, nor even the evidence of my own senses, would lead me to believe in the transmission of thought from one person to another independently of the recognised channels of sensation. It is clearly impossible." The respect that is due to so great a man renders it necessary to show in a few words why this statement (one that used to be common enough) is wholly indefensible. First, the phenomena in question, and all the phenomena within the scope of our Society, are not *contradictions*, but merely extensions of our existing knowledge; they may be strange and inexplicable, but that merely indicates that the evidence in support of the new facts must be recognised as *adequate*. As Laplace long ago said in his *Theory of Probabilities*: "We are so far from knowing all the agents of nature, and their various modes of action, that it would not be philosophical to deny any phenomena merely because in the actual state of our knowledge they are inexplicable. This only ought we to do—in proportion to the difficulty there seems to be in admitting the facts should be the scrupulous attention we bestow on their examination."<sup>1</sup> That this is the true spirit may be seen from the recent discoveries in connection with Radium. These facts appeared even to contradict some of our previous knowledge. We always thought of an atom, as Lucretius did, "strong in solid singleness," as the most immutable and immortal thing in the physical universe. Now it appears to be capable of disintegration and transmutation, and the views of the alchemists are beginning to revive: soon we may be looking for the "philosopher's stone"—the substance that by its presence enables the transmutation of other heavy atoms to come about. Thus does the whirligig of time bring its revenges.

But to return. There is another fallacy in the scientific view expressed by Helmholtz. He said, as many do, that nothing could make him believe in such phenomena. But belief is not

<sup>1</sup> Laplace, *Théorie Analytique des Probabilités*, Introd., p. 43.



a voluntary act of the mind, it cannot be given or withheld at pleasure; it is, obviously, an involuntary state, which follows if our judgment considers the evidence adduced both adequate and conclusive. We can, of course, as many do, refuse to listen to the evidence; and it is worth noticing that in all our minds there is a tendency to repel the intrusion of any ideas unrelated to our usual habits of thought, and which therefore involve an uncomfortable dislocation of our mind: so that attention to evidence of this character is a difficult act of self-conquest. Hence every new departure in thought has to encounter great mental inertia, and wisely so, as preventing hasty and foolish aberrations of mind. But when attention is given, and the evidence considered adequate, it is sheer nonsense to say you won't believe it.

Is there then any other ground why science should not ungrudgingly recognise the evidence so amply given in our Proceedings? I have recently made enquiries among some of my scientific friends who stand aloof from us, to know what is their reason for so doing. Of course life is short, the claim of each particular branch of scientific investigation becomes increasingly exacting, and but few have time to consider the evidence. That is obvious, but why do they shrug their shoulders when you mention, say, telepathy, or the faculty of dowsing? Their attitude reminds me of an anecdote told by that remarkable woman, Miss Caroline Fox, and which I think is mentioned in the memorials of her life. The charming residence of Miss Fox in Cornwall was the meeting ground of many famous men of the last generation. On one occasion that great Irishman, Sir W. Rowan Hamilton, there met Sir G. Airy, the then Astronomer-Royal. Hamilton had just published his famous mathematical discovery of quaternions, and was, I believe, explaining it to Airy. After a short time Airy said, "I cannot see it at all." Hamilton replied, "I have been investigating the matter closely for many months, and I am certain of its truth." "Oh," rejoined Airy, "I have been thinking over it for the last two or three minutes, and there is nothing in it." This is why some of our scientific friends shrug their shoulders at our researches. They feel competent, after a few minutes' consideration, to reject conclusions which may have cost us years of investigation.

In fact, nine-tenths of the positive opinions we are accustomed to hear about psychical research are given *judicially*. That is, the objector speaks of his conclusions as positively as if it were his office to know the truth, and implies that any opposition is a thing for *him* to judge of. "He is annihilated," as Professor De Morgan pointed out some time ago, "by being reduced, no matter how courteously, from judge to counsel. But this is what must be done. The jurisdiction must be denied. The great art is not to pull him off the bench without ceremony, but to pull the bench from under him, without his exactly seeing how he came to tumble, and without proceeding to sit upon it yourself."

Enquiry among my scientific friends has shown me that the root of much, perhaps most, of the scientific scepticism towards our work is not because the phenomena are startling or inexplicable, but because they cannot be repeated at pleasure; hence so very few scientific men have the opportunity of verifying the observations some of us have made. They do not doubt our good faith, but they think we may have been mistaken in our conclusions, and until we can reproduce the phenomena before them, they feel justified in distrusting our results. This might well give ground for suspense of judgment, but surely not for any hostile attitude. It is, of course, most desirable to be able to repeat our experiments at pleasure, but the very nature of our enquiry precludes this. We do not refuse to believe in the fall of meteoric stones unless we can see one falling. We may require a good deal of well-attested evidence for their fall, but, once the fact is established, the stringency of the evidence demanded immediately relaxes. Now, unquestionably there are at present more capable witnesses who can speak from personal and careful enquiry as to the fact of telepathy, or of what is called spiritualistic phenomena, than there are persons living who can testify to having seen the actual fall from space of meteoric stones.

The fact is, our scientific friends do not realise the profound difference that exists between the conditions of a physical and of a psychical experiment. We know what conditions are requisite in the former case, we do *not* know what they are in

the latter, and hence the difficulty of all psychical investigation and the uncertainty of the reproduction of any given phenomenon.

A moment's consideration shows that the demand made upon us by science for the demonstration at any moment of a particular psychical phenomenon is inconsistent with the very object of our enquiry. Psychical experiments depend on the mental state of the subject; you may tell a person to do something, but whether he does it or not depends on the person addressed. Physical experiments are independent of our volition; a magnet attracts iron, or sets itself in the magnetic meridian, irrespective of our mental condition. This obvious difference between the two sets of phenomena is constantly overlooked. Physical science excludes from its survey the element of personality, with which we have to deal and over which we have little or no control. It regards all phenomena as strictly impersonal, and finds abundant field for investigation within the narrow limits it has marked out for itself: these things it regards as real, the rest as shadowy. The truth is, of course, exactly the reverse. The reality of which we are conscious is our self, our personality. It is the phenomena of external nature which are shadowy; shadows cast by some reality of which our senses tell us absolutely nothing.

There is, however, no reason why the methods so successfully pursued by science should not also be pursued in the study of the complex and shifting phenomena of human personality. Now this is precisely the object of our Society—the accurate investigation of that wide range of obscure but wonderful powers included within the mysterious thing we call ourself. Albeit we are but at the beginning of a task so vast that it may, in time to come, make all the discoveries of physical science seem trivial, all its labours seem insignificant in comparison with the stupendous problems that are before us.

We need, therefore, much more experimental evidence in every department of our work. So long ago as 1876, in a paper read before the British Association in that year, I stated that before science could attack with any hope of success the investigation of alleged spiritualistic phenomena, we must know whether definite ideas can unconsciously be communicated from one person to another: whether such a thing as thought-transference does really exist. Evidence was adduced in favour

of this hypothesis. We have done much since then, but much remains to be done before telepathy can take its place as an accepted axiom of scientific knowledge.

I referred at the beginning of my address to some problems in connection with telepathy that await solution. Permit me for a few moments to return to this.

There is one question in regard to telepathy and similar psychical phenomena, which is likely to remain an outstanding difficulty. By what process can one mind affect another at a distance? Physical science teaches us that there is no such thing as "action at a distance." Energy at a distance reaches us either by the translation of matter through space, like a flying bullet, which carries the energy; or by the intermediary action of some medium, like the transmission of sound-bearing waves through the air, or of luminiferous waves through the ether, the energy being handed on from wave to wave. We may talk of brain waves, but that is only unscientific talk, we know of nothing of the kind. Neither do we know how gravitation acts across space: by what means such tremendous forces as bind the solar system together are either exerted or transmitted we know absolutely nothing. We don't talk of gravitation waves, we wait for further knowledge on this mysterious problem; and in like manner we must patiently wait for more light on the mode of transmission of thought through space. It may well be that thought transcends both matter and space, and has no relation to either. That mass, space, and time, may only be but the mental symbols we form of our present material system, and have no ultimate reality in themselves.

Another question is as follows: May not the uncertainty and difficulty of our experiments in thought-transference partly arise from the fact that we are not going to work the right way? We try to obtain evidence of the transmission of a word or idea through some conscious and voluntary act on the part of the percipient. We wait for a verbal or written response. Is not this a mistake? Ought we not rather to seek for evidence of thought-transference in the region of the sub-conscious life? I believe in the case of both the agent

and percipient the conscious will plays only a secondary part. This is also true I think in all cases of suggestion, and of the therapeutic effect of suggestion. It is notably seen in the cures wrought by what is known as Christian Science. I happen to have had occasion to study these somewhat carefully of late, and undoubtedly remarkable cures are effected, it may be by suggestion, but without the usual suggestive treatment; the only formula is the "Allness of God," and the "non-existence of disease." But the healing processes are set going by a purely sub-conscious act. And so in telepathy, we need to hand over the whole matter to the subliminal activities. The difficulty is how to do this. Hypnosis is one way. And in the ordinary waking state, the agent, who makes the suggestion, or transmits the idea, would I believe do so more effectively if, after the intention had soaked into his mind, he left it alone, so far as any conscious effort was concerned. And the percipient should be as passive as possible, make no effort to guess the word, but allow the perception to reveal itself through some involuntary action. Automatic writing would be the most effective, but that is not very common; the twisting of the forked dowsing twig might be utilised, indicating the letters of the alphabet by its motion; or in other ways. In the historical researches I have made on the so-called divining rod, I found it was used in this very manner two centuries ago. In fact what we need to learn is the language of the subliminal life, how it speaks to us, how we can speak to it. The voluntary action of the muscles in speech or gesture is the language of our conscious life; the involuntary action of our muscles, and emotional disturbance, appear to be the language of the sub-conscious life.

Then another point should be noticed, the frequent *lagging* of the impression in the percipient. I observed this again and again in my first experiments in thought-transference 25 years ago. The correct reply to a previous experiment would sometimes come in answer to a later and different experiment. I have noticed the same thing also in dowsing, with some dowsers the motion of the twig lags behind the moment of the impression; it turns *after* the dowser has passed a little beyond the right spot. We have precisely similar phe-

nomena in physical science. The magnetic state of iron lags a little behind the magnetising force it is subjected to; this is known as *hysteresis*, from a Greek word signifying to lag behind. So I believe there is a psychical as well as a physical hysteresis, and if so, it should be reckoned with in our experiments. It is improbable that any psychical action, even of telepathy, occurs without some preceding change in the nerve tissues; in technical phraseology neurosis must always precede psychosis; and then this change must rise till it is of sufficient magnitude to create the reflex that moves the muscles. And all this involves time, which may be greater or less, and so account for the occasional lag we observe.

Other questions suggest themselves. Is it the idea or the word, the emotion or the expression of the emotion, that is transmitted in telepathy? Probably the idea. If so it affords a hint towards the interchange of thought amongst the race in spite of differences of language. Language is but a clumsy instrument of thought, and quite incommensurate to it; its arbitrary signs show it to be but the rudiments of a system which the evolutionary progress of the race may lead us to hope will be more perfect in the future. How much more accurately should we be able to transmit complex ideas and subtle emotions if thought could evoke thought without the mechanism of speech. This may now be the case in the state of life in the unseen. The sanctity and privacy of our minds will, however, require to be protected from unwelcome intrusion, and this, so far as our conscious life is concerned, will doubtless be within our own power to effect, so long as we retain control over our self-hood, our true personality.<sup>1</sup>

Then, again, may not animals share with man this telepathic power? They have in some directions keener perceptive faculties than man, and there is evidence that they are strongly affected by what we call apparitions. It may be that animals, and insects like the ant and the bee, *do* communicate with each other by some process analogous to telepathy. It is worth trying to find out whether say, a favourite dog can respond to a telepathic impact from his master. In centuries to come

<sup>1</sup>In that remarkable book published some 70 years ago, Isaac Taylor's *Physical Theory of Another Life*, Chap. viii., will be found a prevision of telepathy and of some of the ideas contained in the foregoing paragraph.

it is just possible that through some such interchange of feelings we may get into closer communion with all sentient things.

There is one argument in favour of the existence of something analogous to thought-transference, which—so far as I know—has not been used, and it is, I think, a legitimate argument, for it is based upon the underlying unity that exists throughout Nature. The theory of gravitation teaches us that every grain of sand on every seashore in this world, every particle of salt in every salt cellar, is for ever pulling every grain of sand or salt, not only on this earth, but on every planet, or star, in the whole Universe. And *vice versa*, for there is a reciprocal influence ever going on between these myriads of remote things. Nay, more, such is the solidarity of the Universe that an interchange of radiation, as well of attraction, is ever taking place between things on this earth, and also between our planet and every member of the solar system. No fact in physical science is more certain than this. May not this "theory of exchanges," this mobile equilibrium, extend to the psychical as well as the physical universe? Tennyson, with poetic prescience, asks in *Aylmer's Field*:

"Star to star vibrates light, may soul to soul  
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?"

Certainly it seems very probable that every centre of consciousness is likely to react telepathically upon every other centre.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since this address was delivered my attention has been drawn to Mrs. Browning's striking sonnet on "Life," wherein the same idea is elaborated: poets are certainly wonderful pioneers of thought; before telepathy was thought of Mrs. Browning wrote:

"Each creature holds an insular point in space;  
Yet what man stirs a finger, breathes a sound,  
But all the multitudinous beings round  
In all the countless worlds, with time and place  
For their conditions, down to the central base,  
Thrill, haply, in vibration and rebound,  
Life answering life across the vast profound,  
In full antiphony, by a common grace?  
I think this sudden joyaunce which illumes  
A child's mouth sleeping, unaware may run  
From some soul newly loosened from earth's tombs:  
I think this passionate sigh, which half begun  
I stifle back, may reach and stir the plumes  
Of God's calm angel standing in the sun."

It is hard to believe that the play of *vital* forces should be more restricted than that of the *physical* forces; that radio-activities should be confined to inanimate matter. If this unconscious radiation and reaction is going on between mind and mind, then observed cases of telepathy would simply mean the awakening of consciousness to the fact in certain minds. Why some and not all minds, and why so fitfully the conscious perception should be aroused, are problems we must leave to the future, they are quite consistent with what we find everywhere in nature. For my own part, I am disposed to think this interchange is common to the race, and is the chief reason why all men are insensibly moulded by their environment. Only, as I said just now, I believe the telepathic exchange emanates from and affects the sub-conscious part of our personality. It is potentially conscious, and may, and probably will eventually become an integral part of our self-consciousness.

We know as a matter of fact that a vast number of impressions are constantly being made upon us, of which we take no heed; they do not interest us, or they are not strong enough to arouse consciousness. But the impressions are *there*, they leave a mark upon us though we are not aware of it, and they may float to the surface, or be evoked at some future time. One of the most certain and striking results of the investigations made by our Society is that the content of our sub-conscious life is far greater than that of our conscious life. Our minds are like a photographic plate, sensitive to all sorts of impressions, but our ego develops only a few of these impressions, these are our conscious perceptions, the rest are latent, awaiting development, which may come in sleep, hypnosis, or trance, or by the shock of death, or after death.

But even here and now this sub-conscious radio-activity of thought may already play some part in the growing sense of sympathy and humanity we find in the race. And what a change would be wrought if it were suddenly to become an element of consciousness among mankind. To realise the brotherhood of the race would not then be a pious aspiration or a strenuous effort, but *the* reality of all others most vividly before us; involuntarily sharers in one another's pleasures and pains, the welfare of our fellow-men would be *the* factor in our lives which would dominate all our conduct. What would be the



use of a luxurious club and Parisian cooks if the privation and suffering of the destitute were telepathically part and parcel of our lives? Slowly the race *does* seem to be awakening to the sense of a larger self, which embraces the many in the One, to

"A heart that beats  
In all its pulses with the common heart  
Of humankind, which the same things make glad,  
The same make sorry."

The instinct of true religion, like the insight of the true poet, arrives at some great verity without the process of reasoning or the need of proof. Thus it has been with the belief in prayer and in the efficacy of prayer. Scepticism scoffs at a mystery which involves the direct action of mind on mind and the still greater mystery of the movement of the Infinite by the finite,—but faith remains unshaken. For us wayfaring men, however, reason needs some help in climbing the steep attained by faith. And is not this help afforded by the steps slowly being cut in the upward path by means of psychical research? What is telepathy but the proof of the reasonableness of prayer?—No longer need our reason rest content with the plausible explanation that prayer can do no more than evoke a subjective response in the suppliant, that it is inconceivable how the Infinite and the finite mind, the One manifest in the many, can have any community of thought. On the contrary, if telepathy be indisputable, if our creaturely minds can, without voice or sensation, impress each other, the Infinite mind is likely thus to have revealed itself in all ages to responsive human hearts. Some may have the spiritual ear, the open vision, but to all of us there comes at times the echo of that larger Life which is slowly expressing itself in humanity as the ages gradually unfold. In fact the teaching of science has ever been that we are not isolated in, or from, the great Cosmos; the light of suns and stars reaches us, the mysterious force of gravitation binds the whole material universe into an organic whole, the minutest molecule and the most distant orb are bathed in one and the self-same medium. But surely beyond and above all these material links is the solidarity of Mind. As the essential significance and unity of a honeycomb is not in the cells of wax, but in the common life and purpose of the builders of those cells, so the

true significance of nature is not in the material world but in the Mind that gives to it a meaning, and that underlies and unites, that transcends and creates, the phenomenal world through which for a moment each of us is passing. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal."

I will now turn for a few minutes to another branch of our researches, which has special interest for me as it was this subject that first aroused my interest in experimental psychology and to which I gave many months of experiment long before our Society was founded. I refer to Hypnotism.

There are no doubt many present who remember the outcry that was once raised against the investigation of hypnotism, then called mesmerism. Constant attacks were made by the medical and scientific world on the one hand, and by the religious world on the other, upon the early workers at this subject. They were denounced as impostors, shunned as pariahs, and unceremoniously pitched out of the synagogues both of science and religion; and this within my own memory. Physiological and medical science can only hang its head in shame when it looks back upon that period. What do we find to-day—the subject of hypnotism and its therapeutic value recognised! It has now become an integral part of scientific teaching and investigation in several medical schools, more especially on the Continent. I think our Society may fairly lay claim to have contributed to this change of view, and the work of our members, Edmund Gurney, and Doctors Arthur Myers, Milne Bramwell and Lloyd Tuckey, has added much to the knowledge of a subject the importance of which it is difficult to overrate. It is also worthy of note how the former neglect of this subject by science relegated it to the ignorant and the charlatan, and its practice to mysterious and often mischievous public amusements. These are now less common; and though the public apprehension of the dangerous abuse of hypnotism is grossly exaggerated, for it is less open to abuse than chloroform, I, for one, am strongly of opinion that we, as a Society, should discourage, and (as in many Continental countries) get the legislature to forbid the practice of hypnotism except under proper medical supervision.

Now I think it is the duty of our Society to cherish the memory of these courageous seekers after truth, who were the pioneers in this and other branches of psychical research. The splendid and self-sacrificing labours of those distinguished physicians, Doctors Elliotson and Esdaile, in the fields of hypnotic therapeutics and painless surgery under hypnosis should never be forgotten, any more than the later work of Dr. Braid of Manchester. Dr. Elliotson, though at the head of his profession, sacrificed everything for the advancement of this branch of knowledge. The mesmeric hospital in London, and the similar hospital founded in Calcutta by an enlightened Governor-General and placed under the care of Dr. Esdaile, did remarkable work, too little known at the present day. I am therefore glad to see in Dr. Milne Bramwell's *magnum opus* on hypnotism that he draws special attention to the labours of Elliotson, Esdaile and Braid. And it is to be regretted how completely these pioneers are ignored in the works on suggestive therapeutics by Dr. Bernheim, Dr. Liébeault, Dr. Schofield, and some others.

Leaving this part of our subject, now within the purview of science, let us pass to the extreme or advanced wing of psychical research; to that part of our work on which considerable differences of opinion exist even within our Society. I refer to spiritualistic phenomena. With regard to these we must all agree that indiscriminate condemnation on the one hand, and ignorant credulity on the other, are the two most mischievous elements with which we are confronted in connection with this subject. It is because we, as a Society, feel that in the fearless pursuit of truth it is the paramount duty of science to lead the way, that the scornful attitude of the scientific world towards even the investigation of these phenomena is so much to be deprecated. Hence, as in the case of those who were the pioneers in the study of hypnotism, we ought not to forget the small band of investigators who before our time had the courage, after patient enquiry, to announce their belief in what, for want of any better theory, they called spiritualistic phenomena. No doubt we can pick holes in their method of investigation, but they were just as

honest, just as earnest seekers after truth, as we claim to be, and they deserve more credit than we can lay claim to, for they had to encounter greater opposition and vituperation. The superior person then, as now, smiled at the credulity of those better informed than himself. I suppose we are all apt to fancy our own power of discernment and of sound judgment to be somewhat better than our neighbours'. But after all is it not the common-sense, the care, the patience, and the amount of uninterrupted attention we bestow upon any psychical phenomena we are investigating, that gives value to the opinion at which we arrive, and not the particular cleverness or scepticism of the observer? The lesson we all need to learn is that what even the humblest of men *affirm* from their own experience, is always worth listening to, but what even the cleverest of men, in their ignorance, *deny* is never worth a moment's attention.

The acute and powerful intellect of Professor De Morgan, the great exposé of scientific humbug, long ago said, and he had the courage publicly to state, that however much the Spiritualists might be ridiculed, they were undoubtedly on the track that has led to all advancement in knowledge, for they had the *spirit* and *method* of the old times, when paths had to be cut through the uncleared forests in which we can now easily walk.<sup>1</sup> Their *spirit* was that of universal examination unchecked by the fear of being detected in the investigation of nonsense. This was the spirit that animated the Florentine Academicians and the first Fellows of the Royal Society 250 years ago; they set to work to prove all things that they might hold fast to that which was good. And their *method* was that of all scientific research, viz., to start a theory and see how it worked. Without a theory "facts are a mob, not an army." Meteorology at the present moment is buried under a vast mob of observations for want of ingenuity in devising theories; *any* working hypothesis is better than none at all. And so I agree with De Morgan that the most sane and scientific method in psychical research is not to be afraid of propounding a theory because it may seem extraordinary, but have courage to do so and see if it works. The theory of thought-transference led to the accumulation of evidence which

<sup>1</sup> See Preface of *From Matter to Spirit*, p. xviii.

bids fair, sooner or later, to place telepathy among the established truths of science.

The amusing feature in the progress of knowledge is that, usually, critics who resist as long as they can a new theory are apt afterwards, when the theory becomes widely accepted, to use it indiscriminately, as if it covered all obscure phenomena; and so it becomes a kind of fetish in their thoughts. We are all familiar with the imposture theory, with the coincidence theory, and with the telepathic theory; each excellent in their way, but most foolish and unscientific if we allow any one of them to obscure our vision or paralyse our investigation. What is to be reprobated, as De Morgan said, "is not the wariness which widens and lengthens enquiry, but the *assumption* which prevents and narrows it."

Instances are well known of the most acute and careful enquirers, trained psychical detectives we might call them, who having begun with *a priori* reasoning and resolute scepticism, when they have thrown aside their preconceived assumptions, and given the necessary time and patience to the investigation of one particular case, have gone over to the spiritualistic camp. They may be right or wrong in their present opinion, but we must all admit they have far better reasons for forming a judgment than any of us can have. If they are right it follows that the particular case they have investigated is not likely to be a solitary one, but typical of similar cases with us as well as with them.

Pray do not suppose I hold a brief on behalf of spiritualism either as a practice or a religion. On the contrary, to my mind few things are more dismal than the common run of spiritualistic séances. Sometimes they revolt one's feelings, and always they are a weariness to the flesh. Perhaps the manifold experiences I have had have been unfortunate, and I freely admit my remarks apply more particularly to sittings with professional mediums, where what are called physical manifestations take place, which always seem to be on a lower plane, even where the possibility of fraud has been carefully excluded. Nevertheless, if we can get at truth, what does it matter whether we draw it from a well or drag it from a bog?

It is impossible, however, not to feel some sympathy with

the common objection of the doubter that the phenomena are of so paltry a character. But we cannot prescribe to nature, we cannot get rid of the leprosy of doubt by choosing rivers of our own to wash in. And so we must be content with what we find. After all, from a scientific point of view, *nothing* can be paltry or mean that manifests *life*.

Bacteriologists spend their days searching for evidence of the lowest forms of life. And surely any evidence of personality that gives us the faintest, rudest sign that life still persists though the clothing of the body be gone, is worth infinite trouble to attain. Though it may be

“Only a signal shown and a voice from out of the darkness,”

it is not paltry. In fine, it is this natural human longing that renders a dispassionate consideration of the facts, a calm and critical weighing of the evidence, so difficult and yet so imperative.

We must, however, bear in mind, as was pointed out by the present Prime Minister in the remarkable address he delivered from this chair, that if science had first attempted to include in its survey not only physical but psychical phenomena it might for centuries have lost itself in dark and difficult regions, and the work of science to-day would then have been *less*, not more complete.<sup>1</sup> This is very true, the foundations of our faith in the undeviating order of nature had to be laid by the investigation of the laws of matter and motion and by the discovery of the orderly evolution of life. What science has now established is that the universe is a cosmos, not a chaos, that amidst the mutability of all things there is no capriciousness, no disorder; that in the interpretation of nature, however entangled or obscure the phenomena may be, we shall never be put to intellectual confusion.

Now, if instead of investigating the normal phenomena of the world in which we live, science had first grappled with supernormal phenomena, it would not have reached so soon its present assured belief in a reign of law. We believe that fuller knowledge of the obscure phenomena we are investigating will in time come to us, as it has in other branches of

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. x., p. 5.

science, but the appearances are so elusive, the causes so complex, the results of work sometimes so disheartening, that we need the steadying influence of the habit of thought engendered by science to enable us patiently and hopefully to pursue our way.

Possibly historical research amongst the most ancient records may give us fragments of unsuspected information ; for it is very probable that many, if not all the psychical phenomena we are now investigating were known, and the knowledge jealously guarded, in ages long past. The very high civilisation which is now known to have existed thousands of years before Christ in the earliest Egyptian dynasties, makes it almost inconceivable to imagine that subjects of such transcendent interest to mankind were not then part of the learning of the few, part of "the wisdom of Egypt." The seizure of this knowledge by the priestly caste and its restriction to themselves, with penalties to all intruders, was the natural sequence of the lower civilisation that followed. Thus psychical phenomena became veiled in mystery, and ultimately degraded to a mischievous superstition. Mystic rites were added to impress the multitude ; finally divination, enchantment, augury, and necromancy became methods of wielding a mysterious power held by the few. But such practices "wearied the people's intellect, destroyed their enterprise and distorted their conscience."<sup>1</sup> The industry and politics of the people became paralysed by giving heed to an oracle, or to gibbering spirits, rather than to reason and strenuous endeavour. The great Hebrew prophets, the statesmen of their day, saw this clearly and had the courage to denounce such practices in unmistakable terms ; warning the people that by using these things as an infallible guide, or as a religion, they were being misled, and reason was being dethroned from her seat. And so the burden of their speech was, "Thy spells and enchantments with which thou hast wearied thyself have led thee astray."<sup>2</sup> Hence these practices were prohibited, as a careful study of the whole subject shows, because they enervated the nation, and tended to obscure the Divine idea ; to weaken the supreme faith in, and reverent worship of, the one omnipotent Being the Hebrew

<sup>1</sup> Prof. G. A. Smith in his brilliant and scholarly work on *Isaiah*, vol. 2., p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. latter half of *Isaiah*, 47 ch.

nation was set apart to proclaim. With no assured knowledge of the great world-order we now possess, these elusive occult phenomena confused both the intellectual and moral sense, and so they were wisely thrust aside. But the danger at the present day is very different. Instead of a universe peopled with unseen personalities, the science of to-day has gone to the other extreme, and as Mr. Myers once eloquently said, we are now taught to believe "the Universe to be a soulless interaction of atoms, and life a paltry misery closed in the grave." Were the Hebrew prophets now amongst us, surely their voice would not be raised in condemnation of the attempts we are making to show that the order of Nature contains an even vaster procession of phenomena than are now embraced within the limits of recognised science, and that behind the appearances with which science deals there are more enduring and transcendent realities.

I have ventured upon this digression in the hope that I may remove the misgivings with which a part of our work is regarded by some leaders of religious opinion, who from time to time have been in communication with me. Perhaps I may also add that the aversion which some feel towards any enquiry into spiritualistic phenomena arises I think from a misapprehension. With what is spiritual, with religion, these phenomena have nothing in common. They may afford us a rational belief in the existence of life without a visible body, of thought without material protoplasm, and so become the handmaid of faith. But they belong to a wholly different order from that of religious faith. Our concern is solely with the evidence for certain *phenomena*; and as Professor Karl Pearson has said, "Wherever there is the slightest possibility for the mind of men to *know*, there is a legitimate problem for science." Hence *all* appearances, whether of microbes or of men, are legitimate subjects of investigation. Because they happen to be fitful, or phenomena occurring in an unseen environment, does not render the investigation improper or unscientific, though it makes it considerably more difficult.

Now the investigations we have published undeniably establish the fact, that human personality embraces a far larger



scope than science has hitherto recognised. That it partakes of a *two-fold life*, on one side a self-consciousness which is awakened by, and related to time and space, to sense and outward things; on the other side a deeper, slumbering, but potential consciousness, the record of every unheeded past impression, possessing higher receptive and perceptive powers than our normal self-consciousness, a self that, I believe, links our individual life to the ocean of life, and to the Source of all life. It is a remarkable fact that long ago the philosopher Kant instinctively stated the same truth. He says: "[It is possible that] the human soul even in this life stands in indissoluble community with all immaterial natures of the spirit world, it mutually acts upon them and receives from them impressions, of which, however, as man, it is unconscious as long as all goes well."<sup>1</sup> This, of course, was Swedenborg's view. He frequently tells us, "Man is so constituted that he is at the *same time* in the spiritual world and in the natural world." Plotinus, who lived in the third century, held a similar belief, this was in fact the view of the Neo-Platonists and of the later mystics generally.<sup>2</sup> In connection with this subject may I commend to you the perusal of Dr. Du Prel's *Philosophy of Mysticism*, which has been translated with loving labour by one of the earliest and best friends of our Society, Mr. C. C. Massey: perhaps the most valuable part of the work being the suggestive introduction which Mr. Massey has himself added.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Es wird künftig, ich weiss nicht wo oder wann, noch bewiesen werden, dass die menschliche Seele auch in diesen Leben in einer unauföslich verknüpften Gemeinschaft mit allen immateriellen Naturen der Geisterwelt stehe, dass sie wechselweise in diese wirke und von ihnen Eindrücke empfangt, deren sie sich als Mensch nicht bewusst ist, so lange alles wohl steht." (Kant's *Sammtliche Werke*, Hartenstein's Edition, 1867, vol. ii., p. 341.)

<sup>2</sup> Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics," vol. i., contains an excellent summary of the views of the Neo-Platonists. Philo Judæus writing from Alexandria a few years B.C. says, "This alliance with an upper world, of which we are conscious, would be impossible, were not the soul of man an indivisible portion of the divine and blessed spirit." See also Thomas Taylor's translation of some of the works of Plotinus.

<sup>3</sup> Here perhaps I may add one line expressive of my own indebtedness to and affectionate regard for my dear friend C. C. Massey, whose knowledge of all that relates to the higher problems before our Society is more profound than that of any one I know.

There is one interesting point in connection with spiritualistic phenomena which is worth a little attention. As we are all aware, the production of these phenomena appears to be inseparably connected with some special person whom we call 'mediumistic.' This fact affords perennial amusement to the man in the street. But from a purely scientific standpoint there is nothing remarkable in this. Recent discoveries have revealed the fact that a comparatively few substances possess what is called radio-active power. Unlike ordinary forms of matter, these radio-active bodies possess an inherent and peculiar structure of their own. There is therefore nothing absurd in supposing that there may be a comparatively few persons who have a peculiar and remarkable mental structure differing from the rest of mankind. Moreover, the pathologist or alienist does not refuse to investigate epilepsy or monomania because restricted to a limited number of human beings.

Furthermore, physical science gives us abundant analogies of the necessity of some *intermediary* between the unseen and the seen. Waves in the luminiferous ether require a material medium to absorb them before they can be perceived by our senses. The intermediary may be a photographic plate, a fluorescent screen, the retina, a black surface, or an electric resonator, according to the length of those waves. But some medium formed of ponderable matter is absolutely necessary to render the actinic, luminous, thermal, or electrical effects of these waves perceptible to our senses. And the more or less perfect rendering of the invisible waves depends on the more or less perfect synchronism between the unseen motions of the ether and the response of the material medium that absorbs and manifests them.

Thus we find certain definite physical media are necessary to enable operations to become perceptible which otherwise remain imperceptible. Through these media energy traversing the unseen is thereby arrested, and, passing through ponderable matter, is able to affect our senses and arouse consciousness.

Now, the nexus between the seen and the unseen may be physical or psychical, but it is always a specialised substance, or living organism. In some cases the receiver is a body in a state of unstable equilibrium, a sensitive material—like one of Sir Oliver Lodge's receivers for wireless telegraphy—and in

that case its behaviour and idiosyncrasies need to be studied beforehand. It is doubtless a peculiar psychical state, of the nature of which we know nothing, that enables certain persons whom we call mediums to act as receivers, or resonators, through which an unseen intelligence can manifest itself to us. And this receptive state is probably a sensitive condition easily affected by its mental environment.

We should not go to a photographer who took no trouble to protect his plates from careless exposure before putting them in the camera. And I do not know why we should expect anything but a confused result from a so-called medium (or automatist, as Myers suggested they should be called) if the mental state of those present reacts unfavourably upon the sensitive. Infinite patience and laborious care in observation we must have (as in all difficult investigation), but what good results from any scientific research could we expect if we started with the presumption that there was nothing to investigate but imposture?

In connection with this subject of mediumship, it seems to me very probable that a medium, an intermediary of some sort, is not only required on our side in the seen, but is also required *on the other side* in the unseen. In all communication of thought from one person to another a double translation is necessary. Thought, in some inscrutable way, acts upon the medium of our brain, and becomes expressed in written or spoken words. These words, after passing through space, have again to be translated back to thought through the medium of another brain. That is to say, there is a descent from thought to gross matter on one side, a transmission through space, and an ascent from gross matter to thought on the other side. Now, the so-called medium, or automatist, acts as *our* brain, translating for us the impressions made upon it and which it receives across space from the unseen. But there must be a corresponding descent of thought on the other side to such a telepathic form that it can act upon the material particles of the brain of our medium. It may be even more difficult to find a spirit medium there than here. No doubt wisely so, for the invasion of our consciousness here might otherwise be so frequent and troublesome as to paralyse the conduct of our life. It is possible therefore that much of the difficulty and

confusion of the manifestations which are recorded in our *Proceedings*, and in the very valuable contribution which Mr. Piddington has just given us of sittings with Mrs. Thompson, are due to inevitable difficulties in translation on *both* sides?<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, if my view be correct, that the self-conscious part of our personality plays but a subordinate part in any telepathic transmission, whether from incarnate or discarnate minds, we shall realise how enormously complex the problem becomes. So that the real person whom we knew on earth may find the difficulty of self-manifestation too great to overcome, and only a fitful fragment of their thoughts can thus reach us.

There is, however, another view of the matter which to me seems very probable. The transition from this life to the next may in some respects resemble our ordinary awakening from sleep. The discarnate soul not improbably regards the circumstances of his past life "in this dream-world of ours," as we now regard a dream upon awakening. If, even immediately upon awakening, we try to recall all the incidents of a more or less vivid dream, we find how difficult it is to do so, how fragmentary the whole appears; and yet in some way we are conscious the dream was a far more coherent and real thing than we can express in our waking moments. Is it not a frequent and provoking experience that whilst some trivial features recur to us, the dream as a whole is elusive, and as time passes on even the most vivid dream is gone beyond recall? May it not be that something analogous to this awaits us when we find ourselves amid the transcendent realities of the unseen universe? The deep impress of the present life will doubtless be left on our personality, but its details may be difficult to bring into consciousness, and we may

<sup>1</sup> Miss Jane Barlow, who has made a close study of these communications, writes to me on this point: "The almost unimaginable difficulty in communicating may account for many of the failures, mistakes, and absurdities we notice. I think we are apt to lay too much stress on the want of memory. Apart from purely evidential considerations, there seems a tendency to regard it as a larger and more essential element of Personality than it really is. In my own case, for instance, any trivial cause—a headache, a cold, or a little flurry—scatters my memory for proper names. I can easily imagine myself forgetting my own name without suffering from any serious confusion of intellect in other respects, or the least decay of personality."

find them fading from us as we wake to the dawn of the eternal day.

Whatever view we take, the records of these manifestations in our *Proceedings* give us the impression of a truncated personality, "the dwindling remnant of a life," rather than of a fuller, larger life. Hence, whilst in my opinion psychical research *does show us* that intelligence can exist in the unseen, and personality can survive the shock of death, we must not confuse mere, and perhaps temporary, survival after death with that higher and more expanded life which we desire and mean by immortality, and the attainment of which, whatever may be our creed, is only to be won through the "process of the Cross." For it is by self-surrender, the surrender, that is, of all that fetters "What we feel within ourselves is highest," that we enter the pathway of self-realisation. Or as Tennyson expresses it:—

"Thro' loss of Self  
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours  
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,  
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>So also Goethe :

"Und so lang du das nicht hast  
Dieses: 'stirb und werde'!  
Bist du nur ein trüber gast  
Auf der dunken Erde."

which a friend has rendered as follows :

"Whoso heeds not this behest  
'Die to win new birth,'  
Lives but as a hapless guest  
On a darkening earth."

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research.

PART XLIX.

OCTOBER, 1904.

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### PROCEEDINGS OF GENERAL MEETINGS.

THE 122nd General Meeting of the Society was held in the Hall, at 20 Hanover Square, London, W., on Friday, January 29th, 1904, at 8.30 p.m.; SIR OLIVER LODGE in the Chair.

PROFESSOR W. F. BARRETT delivered a Presidential Address, which has since appeared in *Proceedings*, Part XLVIII.

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The 123rd General Meeting was held in the same place on Monday, March 21st, 1904, at 8.30 p.m.; the PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR BARRETT, in the Chair.

DR. ALBERT WILSON read part of the paper on "A Case of Multiple Personality," which is printed below.

## I.

## A CASE OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITY.

BY ALBERT WILSON, M.D.

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## INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE giving an account of this remarkable and almost unique case of Multiple Personality, I propose to call attention to a few details of the mechanism of the Nervous System, some understanding of which is essential for a clear grasp of the main object which I have in view.

My object is to demonstrate that the mind or personality which we call the "Ego," the grand sum total of our character and individuality, is capable of disintegration into minor personalities, good and bad, dependent on the condition of the body that sustains them.

It follows, therefore, that temporary or permanent brain conditions may have an important bearing on the great question of individual responsibility.

We have within us three Nervous Systems. The lowest is the Sympathetic system. It consists of two chains of ganglia inside the body, in front of the spine: also three principal ganglion masses, one for the heart, another for the digestive organs, and a third lower down. The sympathetic nervous system controls all our inner organs, but it specially governs the circulation of the blood, down to the smallest blood-vessel, and so controls the supply of nutriment to each organ. It resembles the Commissariat Department of an Army.

The second nervous system consists of the spinal nerves, which are concerned with the movements of the body and limbs. This represents the Combatant Force of the Army. The sensory nerves are like Scouts, while the motor nerves and muscles represent the Fighting Battalions.

The third nervous system is the Brain, which reaches its highest development in man, after rising in gradations from the fish and amphibian types through the reptiles and birds up to the mammals. It is the Cerebrum, or upper brain, that we may take to represent the Intelligence Department, with the General and his Staff, in a large Army Corps. Just as these higher Officers depend for their existence on the Commissariat, so the Brain depends for its healthy action on the Sympathetic nervous system. It is this system in disorder which I describe here.

So closely are these Nervous systems interwoven that each depends on the other, and any disunion or want of harmony between them upsets the whole organism.

The surface of the Brain has been mapped out by Ferrier and others into areas for the various functions of sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing, and motion. This outer surface, called the Cortex, for the depth of about an eighth to a quarter of an inch is of a grey colour, and contains the nerve cells which form the organic basis of Mind. Under the microscope there are seen five distinct layers of nerve cells in the cortex both of man and of other mammals. These develop gradually from within outwards, from which one would infer that the inner or deeper layers are related to the voluntary protective instincts of the lower animal life. Such is actually the case, and it has been shown by Dr. G. A. Watson that in lower animals, such as the rabbit and hedgehog, the more superficial



layers are much less developed proportionately than the deeper ones. Dr. Watson also showed that in the lower animals the superficial layer (which from the peculiar shape of the cells in it is called the Pyramidal layer) becomes thicker as the animal rises in intelligence; and in man, where intellect prevails over instinct, the Pyramidal layer is highly developed, and considerably thicker than in any of the lower animals. The extensive researches of Dr. J. S. Bolton have further shown that in man the thickness or depth of this pyramidal layer bears a distinct relationship to intelligence. He found that in idiots, who from birth never enjoyed reason, this layer was relatively very shallow; while in the demented there is a decay or dissolution of the pyramidal layer.

Now, healthy brain action, or Mentation, can only occur *if* the brain receives a proper supply of blood, both in quantity and quality. The quantity is, as I have said, regulated by the Sympathetic nerves. But the quality may be bad, as in poisoning by gout, alcohol, morphia, impure air, or malnutrition.

Those whose functions are judicial ought fully to estimate these statements as facts, not theories. The brain, if poisoned by excessive alcoholism, is damaged, and such damage prevents the proper functioning of the individual's original Ego, and leads to the formation of a new personality, associated with damaged structure and of lower type, more nearly approaching the brute creation. Our daily observations are thus scientifically explained.

The Brain is nourished by the Blood, and receives its supply chiefly from the carotid arteries in front, but also from the vertebral arteries behind. These large arteries divide and subdivide into smaller branches and twigs (as an oak tree divides into branches and twigs), penetrating into the brain. The finest arteries or capillaries in the brain will only allow the blood corpuscles to pass along in single file, since they are only about  $\frac{1}{3000}$  of an inch in diameter; but doubtless there is a still finer circulation which our microscopes have not yet been able to reveal.

Bearing in mind this simile of the branches and twigs of a tree, one can easily imagine how paralysis or loss of function of any particular brain area may occur if the branch or artery

supplying that area is blocked from any cause. Thus we find in disease that a clot may shut off the area of speech, or the area of movement of a leg or arm, or both. These are instances of permanent destruction or paralysis.

The Sympathetic nerves are vaso-motor, and have the power of either contracting or dilating the arteries. Thus in blushing, the capillaries dilate. We may also notice in some nervous people peculiar flushes or blotches come and go, usually about the neck or face. Dilatation of the arteries of the brain produces headache and throbbing; or if it occurs in the psychic area, delirium or mania. A very common, I might say popular, disease is sick headache or megrim. Here the carotid or other large arteries are in a state of spasm or contraction, partly shutting off the blood supply to the brain, perhaps for hours. The face then becomes cold and pale, and temporary blindness and nausea also occur.

In other disturbances of the sympathetic nerves we have "dead fingers," chilblains, and frost bites from arterial spasm. There is a disease, called after Reynaud, in which by the contraction of the arteries the fingers become blue or purple, and if it continues, gangrene may result from arrest of the circulation.

If then we can trace the effects of the vaso-motor action of the Sympathetic nervous system in coarse structures like the skin,—when it occurs in a delicate organ like the brain, and in its most highly developed and sensitive part, we must expect a great variety of mental symptoms.

#### HISTORY OF THE CASE.

The patient, Mary Barnes, who is the subject of this paper, was, when I first saw her, aged 12½ years, having been born in October, 1882. She always appeared healthy in mind and body, and was a well-developed child. Her mother is a remarkably healthy woman: her father also is healthy and well built: the other three children are in every way fine specimens.

In April, 1895, she caught a chill and developed influenza,

and was in bed for ten days. She then went out, for the first time after her illness, on Easter Monday; but the weather was cold and a relapse ensued, and she had to return to her bed the next day. On the Saturday she complained of extreme headache, which, though at first relieved by pressure, became worse, until she screamed with the pain, and as the symptoms were aggravated by light and sound, she had to be kept in a dark room. She became very weak, was feverish, and had "tache cérébrale." In the second week there was less pain, and the attacks became intermittent, and "shaking fits," not rigors, occurred. During the second week she grew so weak that she had to be fed with a spoon, and often was unable to swallow. For two days she was supposed to be dying; and once she was thought to be dead, and a woman was sent for to lay her out. This death-like collapse, which occurred again on two more occasions, would seem to have been a phase of one of the abnormal personalities.

In the light of subsequent events, and knowing what we do of similar cases of trance, we may suppose that she really was near to dying.

In the third week the pain ceased, but she was still sensitive to light, and therefore kept in the dark. In addition, she appeared to be blind, and at times was able to recognise her parents only by their voices, or by touch, feeling their faces or even their ears.

(i) During this third week delirium developed, lasting about a fortnight. As explained below, I call this condition B1. The chief characteristic was intense fear of every one, including her parents; she called people "snakes," and said she felt them biting her. Her facial expression was terrible. In her ravings she knew no one, and often hid her face in the pillow when any one approached. It was not an imaginative delirium of the delusional type, nor were there hallucinations (erroneous mental impressions without external cause), but illusions (misinterpretation of external objects). Thus, if she saw a fold in the sheet, or touched a hand, she at once screamed out "snakes," and tried to get away from it. She showed extraordinary strength in these attacks, which was in curious contrast to her dying condition of a few days previous. She also developed jerking or choreic movements

of the legs and arms, and at times general rigidity with opisthotonos,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by lividity, and even coma. She might have ten to twenty attacks a day. The marvel was how her strength lasted out. This mania, we afterwards discovered, was characteristic of the abnormal personality, B1.

(ii) In the fifth week all these symptoms subsided, but her manner changed into that which I afterwards called B2. Her intelligence was good and all headache had disappeared, so that she was thought to be recovering. She was still in bed, as she could not stand, but otherwise had full use and control of her muscles. She now, however, took to nicknaming all her friends.

She called her father—Tom.

her mother—Mary Ann.

her sister F.—The gigger (supposed to be giggler).

the nurse—Susan Jane.

her sister A.—Sally.

her brother F.—George.

Dr. H.—The Jim.

Dr. T.—The Sam.

This curious stage was led up to in the first instance by the following incident:—One day whilst reading, or playing with dolls, she began shaking, then, pushing everything away from her so as to clear a space, said, "It is coming," and after turning a somersault on the bed, sat up and called out "Hullo!" while those around her noticed an altered facial expression. She would address her family and others by the above nicknames, and talked in a babyish manner, clipping her words. She also had a childish, simple, almost silly manner, giggling when spoken to.

It was quite apparent that this babyish mood marked the emergence of a new personality, for her memory of past events was completely obliterated, nor did she know the names of ordinary objects. The "fit" passed off in about half an hour. Her expression would alter, and she frowned and seemed very angry. There would also be sighing and difficult respiration for about a minute, when suddenly she would look

<sup>1</sup> Opisthotonos occurs in lockjaw and some convulsive seizures. The muscular rigidity is so great that the patient rests on the heels and the back of the head, the body being arched.

up with her own natural facial expression and go on as if nothing had happened. These fits recurred several times a day with increasing frequency, and lasted from ten minutes to an hour. There were no premonitory symptoms beyond those described. As days and weeks wore on, the normal state was of shorter duration; and indeed so prolonged was the abnormal, that I visited her almost daily for ten weeks before I saw her in her normal condition.

For the sake of simplicity I will here give further particulars of this abnormal phase. The patient became childish, clipped her words, and had no knowledge of ordinary names, nor of her ordinary surroundings. Thus she did not know the meaning of the word "legs," and if you explained, she would say, "Legs, what legs? What dat mean? Dese sings? Dese long sings?" and so on. When I said, "I want you to walk," she replied, "Walk? What dat, what walk mean?" I said, "Get on your feet," pointing to them. "Get on them things? Those feet? What feet? Walk, mean get on those things? Can't do it!" So I lifted her on to her feet, but she could not stand. Her feet gave way, turning outwards. But some things she appeared to know; thus, she would call a drawing slate "a jawing skate," and yet if I touched her nose and asked what it was called, she either might not know or would call it her ear. But if I said it was the nose, she would argue before she understood. Similarly she called her mouth her nose, and her chin her mouth, and her ears were her eyes. This habit of misnaming things disappeared in a month or two; probably she heard the right names from those about her, for in this abnormal condition she would be quite lively and bright, though restless. She would turn over books, looking for N's and O's. P she called H, and E, B. She also reversed colours, seeing the complementary colour. Black she called white, green red, and *vice versa*. She wrote her words backwards, beginning at the tail of each word, and writing it from right to left, but to the right of the word preceding it, so that she had to calculate what space would be wanted for each word, which she did with very fair correctness, as may be seen from the specimen reproduced (Plate I.). This writing was done with ease and ordinary rapidity, and the total effect of it does not differ from ordinary writing.

She also wrote figures backwards. She could not at first write to dictation nor originate a word, behaving as if the word-centre in the brain were switched off from the writing-centre. She could only copy,—the writing-centre communicating with the word-visual-centre.

But as weeks rolled on and as her education improved, she acquired the power of writing from her own ideas or to dictation. This may suggest that in the abnormal state her store-house of word-memories was not empty, but that she lacked the power of association of names with objects. At the same time as this new personality appeared, that is in the fifth week of her illness, catalepsy occurred. The cataleptic fits came on no matter whether she was in the normal or abnormal mental condition.

As the abnormal personality B2 was a psychic condition, while the catalepsy was a condition of the muscles, the two conditions are clearly not to be regarded as identical. Any excitement, such as a knock at the door, or even the noise of my carriage entering the street, would provoke a cataleptic attack. The feet and legs first became rigid, usually extended, seldom flexed. Or it might be first one leg and then an arm. The rigidity usually travelled to all the muscles of the body, except the face and neck. Sometimes she would be fixed up like a ball, so that she could be lifted all of a piece by one limb. Or an arm might become fixed in the attitude of feeding when such an act was in process. I have seen both arms and hands fixed, holding the cup and spoon, which could not be released. She called the attacks "brackets," and they were evidently painful and frightened her, and during them she dreaded being touched. In five to ten minutes the muscles relaxed spontaneously, and then she was much exhausted. These cataleptic fits were very constant for about six weeks to two months, and then became less frequent, so that weeks might pass without an attack. Finally after two years they disappeared.

It was not until July 20th, 1895, that I saw her in the normal condition. Her father had brought her to my house in a bath chair, as she could not stand. She seemed completely lost, and understood nothing. These vacant periods were very common, and may have been either phases in the

conditions just described, or forerunners of another abnormal sub-stage, in which she was quite an idiot. I now incline to the latter view.

During her visit to my house she suddenly returned to the normal. Her appearance then was that of a modest, pleasant-faced girl. She said "Good morning, sir," and talked quietly and rationally for about five minutes. She told me she knew nothing of the attacks or of what she said or saw in them. She said she had only seen me once before (this was one day when she was passing from the normal to the abnormal as I entered her bed-room), though she knew from the others that I went to see her. Then just as suddenly her expression and manner changed. She looked angry and frowned, pouting and wearing a much annoyed expression. After that her features relaxed; she smiled and again assumed the vacant childish look, and began talking baby talk. She said Mary Barnes (giving her proper name) had gone, and she hated Mary Barnes, because people liked Mary Barnes better than herself. While normal she had risen from her seat and stood in an ordinary way; but as soon as the new personality came on she lost the support of her ankles, and her father had to prevent her falling to the ground.

Let me now review the first three months of her illness. I propose to call her normal state (Mary Barnes) A. The abnormal condition I call B. But there were ten abnormal states, more or less different from one another. These I will call B1, B2, to B10.

The illness began with influenza, essentially an acute nerve disease: it passed on to meningitis. The highest brain cells we may assume were damaged, perhaps from the toxin, perhaps in their nutrition, or from both causes. My first impulse was to call it a case of Hystero-epilepsy, which loose term covers a great variety of conditions, but affords no explanation of any of them.

A medical *confrère* suggested that she had at some time been hypnotised, but this was not the case, and, as I shall show later, attempts to hypnotise her entirely failed. Yet her condition resembled that of somnambulism or hypnosis; for her normal state A knows nothing of the abnormal B, while the abnormal B has a faint glimmer of the existence of A and of what she

does. I observed later that though at first no abnormal stage knew anything of any other abnormal stage, yet after a time, probably through hearing conversations, one sub-stage would learn a little of another sub-stage (see, *e.g.* in Appendix I., p. 392, a letter written by B9 on November 22nd, 1896, referring to an incident that had happened to B2).

Yet, in spite of the failure of the attempts to hypnotise her, her father could often by suggestion bring her from the abnormal to the normal. By caressing her and addressing her by name in a coaxing manner, he would bring her to her normal self, though she always relapsed quickly, perhaps in ten minutes or perhaps in three minutes. As months rolled on, it became more difficult and finally impossible to effect these brief recoveries.

B1 was a condition of acute mania, accompanied by intense fear, amounting to terror, with illusions of snakes, psychical blindness, and great thirst and craving for oranges and lemonade. These symptoms enabled us to diagnose it, not as ordinary mania, but, from its sudden recurrence and disappearance, as a distinct phase of alternating personality.<sup>1</sup>

B2 was a stage in which she became a simple child, requiring education in every-day details, and also reversing ideas or conditions, as in writing, perceiving colours, etc. When addressed by her proper name, she said it was not her name, nor could we find a name to please her; she said she had no name—she was “a thing.” So we called her in this stage “a thing,” or “good thing,” and she always responded to it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In acute mania there is overactivity of the pyramidal layer, with congestion of the capillaries.

<sup>2</sup>In this condition spasm of the anterior cerebral artery would deprive the prefrontal area of nourishment; also the motor area of the foot, which was always paralysed. The prefrontal, as the highest psychic and association area, might thus misinterpret all external impressions. Some might explain it as a derangement of the mind, reversing objects and misapplying names. The memory of words and names existed, but, if I may so put it, the labels had got mixed. Perhaps the inaction of the prefrontal area would account for all the phenomena. Another explanation might be that the more recently educated pyramidal cells were shut off by deprivation of blood supply and the deeper layers which had been educated up to the age of four or five left intact, for she now resembled a young child in every way.



(iii) On July 24th, 1895, she passed out of B2 into a *third* abnormal stage B3, which her parents named "Old Nick," because she was very passionate and bit her clothes. After the anger passed off she was very sorry and would say it is "a naughty man," and that he only comes for a minute and would not bite "them things," touching her face and hands. B3 differed from "a thing" or B2 in being more educated, for "Nick" could read and write and had better physical health than the other personalities. B3 was a frequent visitor, staying for several weeks at a time, and I will later give a more complete account of her doings in this stage.

(iv.) In the B4 substage, which occurred first in August, 1895, she was a deaf mute. During the attacks she took no notice of loud noises close to her ear: and communicated by talking on her fingers, which method she understood slightly in the normal state. This B4 state came on after a prolonged catalepsy, but passed off quite suddenly, changing to B2. But in September she was again deaf and dumb for a fortnight.<sup>1</sup> She changed back from B4 to B2, "a thing."

One Sunday in October, 1895, when she was rolling on the floor as B2, crying with toothache, I resolved to extract the tooth under chloroform. The late Dr. Althaus had come out to see her. After I had extracted the molar, she was pleased to be relieved of the pain. Her father now brought her round to the normal A. She was greatly surprised at the blood and gap in her jaw and asked how it was, as she never as Mary Barnes had felt any toothache and knew nothing of the chloroform or extraction.

So A was unconscious of B's physical suffering.

(v) The B5 substage appeared only on one occasion, November 26th, 1895, and lasted until December 20th. In this condition she had attacks of paralysis in the legs, became deaf and dumb for about an hour at a time, and lost all memory of events which had occurred more than three days before. She said she had "only been here three days" and was "only three days old." As I had not seen her for three days, she consequently did not know me. She also reversed things. She called the flame of the fire or gas black, black white, and a fat pug thin. She

<sup>1</sup> The spasm of branches of the middle cerebral artery would shut off the blood supply to the centres of speech and hearing.

spelt backwards but wrote forwards. Otherwise she understood everything in the house and gave no trouble. She complained of pain in the left temple, which suggests spasm of the middle cerebral artery.

On December 20th her condition changed very suddenly. Though just previously paralysed in the legs, she jumped up and ran upstairs to her bed. Here she commenced turning quickly round and round on her back and shoulders with her legs in the air. She also had a peculiar way of resting on her head and trying to walk up the wall. She executed all these movements on her bed, and so peculiar and rapid were they that they resembled an acrobatic performance. Then came the fear of snakes and thirst and we recognised the substage B1. This was its first appearance since the meningitis in May, 1895. This B1 substage of mania lasted three weeks, till January 13th, 1896. There was an exact repetition of the May symptoms, and she remembered exactly all the events of May when she had the fever and influenza, while she knew nothing of subsequent events. She also complained of headache, and asked for the cold water coil which she had had then. In her extreme thirst she would eat any number of oranges in a ravenous fashion, one after the other, though at no other period has she cared to eat oranges. She also asked for the nurse who attended her in her first illness and whom she had not seen since. After about a fortnight these symptoms passed off and she was able to go out in a bath chair, but her mind was still a blank as far as the events of the past seven months were concerned.

One curious phenomenon occurred on the evening of January 12th, 1896. Her memory went back to April, 1895, to the early stage of the influenza, when she had pains in her head, but not the severe symptoms. She said she was Mary Barnes—for in mid-April the dual personality had not been recognised. It was an exact repetition of the symptoms, for when she was ill in April she did not show the normal intelligence of Mary Barnes. At 3 A.M. on the following morning she became normal for about an hour, all symptoms of influenza disappearing, and again between 8 and 9 A.M., after which she changed to B2, and, except for a few normal intervals, remained so for three weeks until February

7th, 1896. On January 28th, 1896, she wrote as B2 a letter to her father (see Appendix I., p. 387). The letter was childish and the words were spelt phonetically. It is however written forwards, for as the result of education B2 now wrote forwards usually. On January 22nd, 1896, she was shown to the Clinical Society and seen by Drs. Jones, Savill, Mickle, Bramwell, Althaus, Lloyd Tuckey, and Mr. Barrett. She was then B2, but her father twice brought her to the normal. Great efforts were made to hypnotise her, even with the help of chloroform, but all efforts failed and she became much exhausted, sighing deeply and flushing, as in hysteria. On March 6th, 1896, she had an attack of mania—substage B1. It came on very suddenly, when she was in the B2 condition. About 8 P.M. she had said to her father that she felt very ill and wanted to go upstairs, and although she then occupied the front bedroom, she ran into the back room which she had occupied in May, 1895, when she had the first attack of delirium.

I saw the whole attack. She was jumping on her hands and knees on the bed, calling out "snakes," "nakes," and was greatly terrified. The pupils were widely dilated, the face flushed, the pulse very rapid and feeble, together with breathlessness and constantly great exhaustion. She would bury her head in the pillow as if to avoid the snakes; or at other times, kneel and say her prayers. If we touched her, she called us "great big nakes." I tried to fix her gaze, but it frightened her and she put her hand over my eyes saying, "take them away." She devoured oranges like an animal, biting off the peel and throwing it away. The fruit she swallowed greedily in lumps, calling out "more, more." Suddenly the excitement ceased and she sat on the bed, placed on the pillow in front of her a small box, and on the box a book and an orange. She imagined herself a fisherwoman, for she called out "Fish! fish! fish! Shrimps ½d. each," and putting the pillow with its load on her head, called out "Who'll buy my fish?" Then she threw down "the fish" and tried to walk up the wall, resting first on her back, then on her shoulders and finally on her head.

I tried to rouse her by making as much noise as I could close to her head with a large key and a tin tray. It frightened her and she grabbed the key and threw it away. Next I *shouted* to her to wake up: she said she was awake, but took



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very little notice of anything going on about her. Another sudden change and she looked round the room with an air of curiosity and said "This is not my room," and as she could not walk, crawled on her hands and knees into the front bedroom and climbed on to the bed. As soon as she got on the bed in the front room she changed to the B2 of June, 1895. She lost the wild maniacal look for the simple childish face. She saw me looking round the door and said "Hullo, there is the new gentleman," which was my appellation in June, 1895, nine months earlier. She said she had seen me that morning for the first time. She, however, had not seen me that morning, and was probably referring to some remote memory of one of my visits in June, 1895, for she said I then had on a black waistcoat with green spots. In reality that June I had on a white waistcoat with red spots, the complementary colours of what she imagined. She was very amiable and asked for a pencil and paper and began writing backwards, as in June, 1895. She called her mouth, eyes, and her nose, eyes. She said she had no mouth. Though very much exhausted during the B1 state of mania, she seemed quite fresh after she changed to the B2 personality. The next morning she knew nothing of the mania and continued in the B2 stage. On April 4th she had a violent epileptic convulsion, which was followed by one or two slighter fits at long intervals.

(vi) On May 6th the *sixth personality* appeared. We called her "pretty dear" or "good creature" in this stage, as she was a very sweet amiable child, though very ignorant. She had to be taught to spell, read and write. She denied ever having seen me before. She was rather like B2 ("a thing"), but more tractable. B2 sometimes showed a mischievous disposition, *e.g.*, breaking window panes or putting mustard in her younger sister's eye. B6 on the contrary is very kind. Another point of distinction was shown later on in that B6 learned a little French from her father, while neither B2 nor A could learn French.

B6 was rather an important personality, for now the normal A became a very rare visitor, putting in an appearance perhaps only once a week, while B6 became more permanent, until finally after two years it remained constant and all other personalities disappeared. Usually B6 has no motor paralysis.

and is domesticated and helps her mother. B6 is rather a subdivided personality, for as "good creature" she can walk, but as "pretty dear" she cannot. "Pretty dear" occasionally loses the use of her hands.

(vii) In another six days, on May 12th, the 7th *personality* appeared. She called herself "Adjucose Uneza." She only came once and lasted ten days to a fortnight, meanwhile alternating with B2 and gradually fading. The special features of B7 were that she had a clear memory of small events of her early childhood, while all memory of and since her illness was obliterated. Thus she spoke of going on a tram to the London Hospital to see her father, a thing which she really had done in April, 1885, when two and a half years old, and remembered her mother being ill with diphtheria when she was under two. She also remembered the first part of the influenza and also a visit to L——, but nothing of the relapse or meningitis which followed in April and May, 1895. B7 could not stand or walk.<sup>1</sup>

On May 31st her father brought her to my house as B2: an hour later B7 appeared suddenly and was unable to walk. Her father brought her back to my house in a bath chair, and on her second visit she had no memory of having been in my house an hour before. When B7 appeared her mind was quite a blank as to recent events. Thus she did not remember me for some time.

(viii) On June 20th another severe fit of convulsions occurred, in which she never bit her tongue, though violent during them and much dazed on recovery. The following morning, June 21st, she woke up greatly confused and knew no one. She said she was only born last night and so how could she know anything? However, she knew her father as "Tom," and her mother as "Mary Ann." She was very like B5 (which appeared on November 26th, 1895), but could not be the same, as there was an entire absence of associated memories. This state lasted for about three days and never appeared again. It may have

<sup>1</sup> We know that in some cases of senile decay the memory of early childhood stands out clearly. Does not the substage B7 somewhat correspond to this? I would suggest that from arterial spasm the more superficial cortical layers are weakened or paralysed, while the deeper layers with earlier memories are stimulated.

been no more than a post-epileptic confusion or it may have been another personality, B8.

A prolonged observation of the case has led me to feel sure that A or Mary Barnes, the normal child, knows nothing of what happens in any of the abnormal states. Whereas in some of the abnormal states, as in B2, there is a faint glimmer of knowledge of the normal A. This knowledge of the normal does not begin at once after the transition, but develops later. June, 1896, was a trying month, for she constantly shifted about from one personality to another, perhaps three or four times a day, once manifesting three personalities in five minutes. They also seemed modified at times. On July 8th, B3 or "Nick" returned quite suddenly; she could then as B3 walk or read or write. It was the first time she had been able to walk properly since May 31st. "Nick" was healthier than any other sub-stage. The normal A, Mary Barnes, only came momentarily to the surface; "Nick" stayed ten weeks and showed very interesting phases. As "Nick" she went in July, 1896, to the seaside and stayed there about five weeks, getting much stronger on her legs, though this temporary improvement was followed by motor paralysis for five or six weeks. "Nick" said that she had never seen the sea before this visit, although, as a child, Mary Barnes had stayed at the seaside.

On August 14th, when at the seaside, her mother was ill in bed. Her father cuddled her and called her by name, and thus brought her back to the normal state, when she expressed surprise at seeing her mother in bed, and exclaimed, "What! dear mother; not out of bed yet!" This is a striking act, for in the abnormal B3 stage, as "Nick," she had been nursing her mother very attentively, and also had showed great distress at her mother's illness. The next day she returned home, being still "Nick" on the journey. When home her father brought her to the normal A: Mary Barnes was greatly surprised to find herself at home, having been unconscious of the journey. Also whilst normal she remembered the normal stage of the previous day and seeing her mother in bed. She returned to the seaside in a week, and it was noticed that the normal A, now so rare a visitor, began to come more frequently, and that when going down a particular road. So her parents



began to suggest to "Nick" that Mary Barnes should come soon as they reached this road. This "Nick" resented, looking cross would walk on so as not to hear; but in three minutes she would run back with her arms out to embrace her father, so pleased to be back again in the normal state clothed and in her right mind. In August, 1896, she bathed in the sea. As a child she had done so before: but now "Nick" she bathed for the first time.

Sub-stage B3 or "Nick" continued from July 8th to September 20th. On Sunday, September 20th, "Nick" left at 2 P.M. during her dinner. The new state was a *variation of B6* and was called "Tom's Darling," Tom being her father's name in nearly all, if not all, abnormal stages: this being the only common link, in fact, between the many sub-stages. In this new state as I saw her on the 21st, she had no memory of everything was upside down, she could not read or write, could not walk. She was very ignorant of ordinary things and did not remember her visit to the seaside. It often happened when a new sub-stage appeared that the mind was an absolute blank at first. On the 23rd she called herself, in answer to questions, "Tom's Darling." On September 26th "Nick" returned for half an hour and got her mother's tea ready. A few days after, when "Tom's Darling," B6, she described to me the incident of September 20th; she said "in the middle of dinner on Sunday 'Old Nit' went away and 'Tom's Darling' came. 'Nick' was very kind and left me half the dinner." "Tom's Darling" ate a very good dinner until the change; but the new personality would not finish the dinner, being dazed and memory blank with altered facial expression; she also lost the use of her feet, after having been able to walk for two months. "Tom's Darling" said the fire was in the bedroom before, so the "Tom's Darling" personality evidently must have appeared at some previous time, and we believe she was a modification of B6, "Tom's Darling" or "Good creature." It appeared that two or three sub-personalities sometimes merged into one, as in this instance. (ix) On October 10th "Tom's Darling" gradually left and a new personality arrived, B9. The transition seemed to occupy the whole day and was not, as usual, accompanied by any serious physical disturbance. She had, however, fits of temper, chattered about her younger sister about, and trying to beat her with a

She talked like a baby, could not walk properly and could only manœuvre about with a chair. She also tried to hit every one with a strap, watching her opportunity, and attempted to lock herself into the room. She spoke of things which had happened in her illness of April, 1895: so she must have been here before, and as her parents remember similar incidents lasting off and on for some days, it is clear that this was not the first development of B9. Her mind was a blank. She said she had no name and did not know me. She wrote and spelt backwards like B2. This state lasted in 1896 for about a week.

Knowing how they worried "Tom Dodd" (her father), she tried to give up her naughty ways. She could speak a little French, but did not know how she had learnt it. It so happens that only B6 and not even A, Mary Barnes, knew French. She talked of when she was here before, and said she was in bed and that "Jim," as she called a particular doctor, used to come and see her, thus recalling events which had happened in April, 1895. We evidently had not recognised this personality in the early mental tumult. Another doctor, whom she called "Sam," and whom she very much disliked, also came to her memory. She happened at this time to see him in the street and in temper shook her fist at him, which at once brought on an attack of catalepsy. She knew nothing of any events in her life previous to October 10th, 1896, except such as had happened in April, 1895, during her acute meningitis(?)

She at first would read backwards from right to left, making nonsense; but her father soon taught her to read in the proper way. Although she regained at times the power of walking, she might be temporarily attacked by paralysis, not only of the legs but of the arms.

A new feature occurred—a tendency to kleptomania, which she defended on the principles of common and modern socialism; "if people don't give you things, why, nick it; quite right too!" One day when in the village she took an apple at a shop door, but seeing a policeman she went back and replaced it. She was always threatening to steal, but after a time, on being told it was wrong, was sorry. During this sub-stage B9, "Nick," or B3, appeared for a day in October 16th.

After "Nick" left, though confused, she seemed to know that she had been in a different condition. This might be aided by the free amount of talking around her. The same evening she walked up to my house as B3 or "Nick." She wished to show me a present, a toy wigwam, which had been given her an hour before. Suddenly B9, the retrograde state, arrived. Her face altered, and she would have fallen from the chair but for help, as she had lost the power in her legs. The toy fell from her hands, and when the first dazed condition had passed off, I picked it up and tried to interest her in it, but she did not care for it, and said she had never seen it before. When the former state B3 returned, she again was interested in the toy. The next day she was B9, and so remained for another fortnight. If asked her name she said she had no name. She was frightened by thunderstorms, and after one had an attack of catalepsy. Yet B3, "Nick," likes thunderstorms.

On October 31st she awoke in the B1 or maniacal state. She was dazed and knew no one. She had intense headache, beating her head and screaming with the pain. She jumped about the bed, and was violent, even breaking things. There was also catalepsy. In one severe attack the feet and legs were drawn up behind over the back, and the arms over the shoulders, so that she caught hold of her toes with her fingers. She screamed with the pain, but we could not loosen her. Strange to say she slept well. One peculiar feature was the approximation of B1 to B9. The numbering of the sub-stages is not correct according to their appearance in time. We had not recognised B9 till autumn, 1896; but it had in reality existed in April, 1895, just before B1 appeared in the same month. So the sequence was like the repetition of a cycle, yet not an orderly successive repetition. From B1 she changed to B2, and in the B2 state she had toothache, and for the second time I gave her chloroform and drew the offending molar. Previously as B2 she took chloroform well, but this time there was respiratory spasm and collapse, requiring artificial respiration. There was some discharge excited from the motor centres as evinced by muscular spasms and general rigidity and opisthotonos, the patient rising on her heels when we tried to hold her on the couch. The great effort produced collapse, when

he fell back livid and respiration ceased. She soon recovered with the help of artificial respiration and was quickly unconscious.

As confirming the theory of the repetition of former cycles, she passed gradually from B1 to B2 during November 19th or 20th. She called herself "A thing," and had the same childish way as previously described, and also the same memories. For the space of about a fortnight she was very ill and unsettled, changing without apparent rhyme or reason from B1 to B2 or B9, occasionally becoming cataleptic and adopting all sorts of attitudes and manifesting cutaneous hyperæsthesia, the slightest tickling causing pain. The normal A appeared occasionally for about five minutes at a time, and then disappeared. When calm, the patient could now walk or sit for two or three hours at needlework, drawing, reading or writing. She talked baby talk like B2, and called herself "nothing" like B2. Then the destructive fits would come on (B9) and she called herself "the dreadful wicked creature." Apparently she regretted doing wrong, but could not help it, though she knew at the time the evil thereof. Are we not all built on the same lines? As "wicked creature," B9, she would hit any one near her, or push them aside if in her way. She was also destructive, especially putting articles like slippers in the fire. At a later period when in this condition she tried to put her little sister on the fire, and would have succeeded if her mother had not entered the room. Does not this show how mental lapses may remove consciousness of surroundings and responsibility? From November 1st to December 10th, 1896, she was generally B2, "good thing," or B9; from December 10th to 29th, she was B6.

(x) In the evening of December 29th, 1896, she gradually changed. She sat on the hearth-rug, was cross and stupid, and finally her mind became a blank. This condition, which I have called sub-stage B10, developed in the course of the next two or three days till she became a blind imbecile. There was now no excitement, only apathy. She sat quiet by the hour, absolutely blind, with a vacant, stupid expression. She understood nothing, and at times appeared to be deaf. Her speech was incoherent, and she

used very few words. She called out: "Mutter," "Tom" (her father), and also "Picters." There seemed to be paralysis of the ocular muscles, as the eyes protruded and stared, and the pupils were widely dilated. She was guided only by touch and sound. If I handed her a piece of paper the rustle guided her, and she grabbed at it. Sometimes she would sit for hours rolling beads on a tray.

On January 3rd, 1897, about 2 P.M., she was observed to be drawing with a pencil. As she was drawing correctly, it was thought that sight had returned. But it was not so.

It is remarkable that while Mary Barnes, the normal A, never could draw at all, this blind personality, B10, could draw perfectly. Was this a hereditary ancestral faculty suddenly called into exercise, or an unknown latent power? She used to draw the fashion plates or pictures which one sees in the illustrated papers. They were very well done, even to small details of laces and patterns, etc. At a later stage she began colour-drawing with crayons. She was absolutely blind, as was proved by placing books between her eyes and the paper, which made no difference either to the rapidity or accuracy of her performance. We also proved that she was guided by touch. If the drawing was pulled away, she would put out her left finger and ask for it to be placed on the part she had been drawing by calling out the name, say the veil or nose. Then if her finger was so placed, she would resume. Later she became so sensitive that she could herself detect by touch where the pencil marks were, and if the paper was shifted could begin again correctly.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, ten weeks after the blindness came on she was able to copy by touch. Her general intelligence was then improved, though the blindness continued. If one drew a pencil line

<sup>1</sup> Anatomically we must divide sight into two elements, sensory and psychic. In this stage, B10, the area of sensory vision was quite paralysed. Extreme action of the sympathetic would cause dilatation of the pupil, and if it also constricted the circulation in the area supplied by the posterior cerebral artery, it would shut off the corpora quadrigemina and the lower part of the occipital lobe and calcarine areas, which are connected with sensory vision. Whereas, since she could draw, she must have been guided in so doing by her psychic visual centre, which is situated in the occipital area, this being supplied by the middle cerebral artery. (See Plate IX.)

across her picture, she would detect it by touch and rub it out. It was very strange to see her feeling the copy with the left fingers and drawing with the right. She copied writing in the same way. She could feel the red ink lines ruled on foolscap. Sometimes we thought she could see, for in drawing in colours she would hold the crayons so close to the eye that they would sometimes touch the cornea, which at this stage was completely insensitive.

She would also write verses and names from memory, as if the word memory centre was restored to her. Yet she had no memory of past events or of spelling. One day when she seemed brighter and I said to her write "L-A-D-Y, Lady," she wrote "Lady," and said, "It is not L-A-D-Y, it is Lady." She could write her name in a block, but mentally did not disconnect or isolate the letters. In other words, she could not spell. One day in January she completely and suddenly regained her sight for about two minutes. She called to her sister, "I can see you." Her sister said, "What am I doing?" she replied correctly, "You are combing your hair." Her intelligence with regard to her surroundings improved, but she was practically an idiot. If I called to her loudly "Wake up," she laughed vacantly and replied, "Is awake." If I said, "You are asleep," she replied with apparent indifference, "Not sleep." She, however, did not know what hands and feet were.

On January 16th, 1897, the normal A appeared three or four times for about two minutes at a time. She could see, but could not walk, though normal. Once she said she felt so well and comfortable. Is that not incomprehensible? Another time she told her mother she felt "sometimes to be dying and to go right away." This was said in an abnormal state, and appeared to refer to the changing period, either from normal to abnormal, or *vice versa*.

She has always called me "the voice" when in this "imbecile" state: perhaps because I shouted at her. She wrote me several letters signed "Tom's Lamb." On January 25th, when she was unable to stand, I commanded her very firmly and persistently to do so, and with success. After this the power gradually returned after an absence of three to four weeks.

Towards the end of January, 1897, after four weeks' blindness, she began to improve, not only in intelligence, but also in sight. She was very short-sighted, but could see colours and pictures at a distance of three inches. She could not see about a room, and had to feel where she was going. This we proved by several games at hide and seek, which did not please her when she was tricked. She was sufficiently blind to walk against the wall. Ophthalmoscopically the eye is and was normal. Mr. Tweedy kindly examined her eyes, and wrote the following report of them:

*Feb. 8th, [1897].*

I have examined Miss [Barnes's] eyes. The media are clear, the discs and fundus healthy; the refraction of the eyes is also practically normal, there being merely a slight degree of myopia in the left eye. The eye-lids were widely open and seemed spasmodically retracted, as in cases of ex-ophthalmic goitre. The child seemed unable to see anything at more than 2 feet away, but she could read words of the smallest print (No. 1 Jaeger) at about 3 inches from the eye. There is, however, nothing in the eye to explain the peculiar nature of her sight.

J. TWEEDY.

When using the ophthalmoscope, if the light appeared to focus on the yellow spot, the normal A, Mary Barnes, returned, but only momentarily. "A" still came occasionally, and saw and walked quite well. B10 was still very ignorant,—for instance, not knowing what a horse or dog was. Nor was she anxious to learn, usually answering "nothink" to any question. She knew the parts of her face, but not her legs or arms. She was, however, very amiable, and had a good memory for things happening daily. In February she was able to go about the house, though supervision was necessary. B10 differed from all other sub-stages, in that she did not know her way about the house. This is a special point which distinguishes B10 from the other personalities. She had to learn not only the position of the rooms, but also the position of the furniture. Before she learned this she was once stopped from walking down the cellar stairs, which she thought were on level ground.

Her method of counting was unique. Her numerals were limited to 1-2, 1-2, 1-2. She counted in pennies, which she called "brownies," up to a shilling, or a shilling and so many

"brownies." I asked her how much is twice six. She worked it out on paper thus:

1 . 2	1 . 2
1 . 2	1 . 2

and then said a shilling. If I asked her how much is twice eight, she would work out the answer as a shilling and four "brownies." It was a little complicated.

Once when I asked her very quickly to count her fingers, she, automatically touching each finger, said 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; but quickly corrected herself and said, "No, that's wrong; 1, 2; 1, 2; 1, 2." Seeing that it did not fit, she began again, "1, 2," then a pause, repeating "3," adding, "three, what's that?" then she added "four," and, surprised at herself, said "five." Apparently the automatic sub-consciousness was aroused. But if one gave her four biscuits, she would count them "1, 2, 1, 2."

A curious link with her past memory occurred in the following incident: She was very constipated, and asked that "the voice" (that is, myself) would give her something, but *not salts*. As B10 she had no knowledge of salts, but she had had salts about a year earlier, I cannot say in what personality. I hoped to show her in this state to the Clinical Society, but she had altered to B6 or B2, it was not quite clear which. This was on February 26th, 1897. But in the middle of March she returned to the imbecile state B10, and was even worse than before; for she was paralysed, blind, deaf and dumb. She kept on muttering "do, do, do." The only way to feed her was to touch her with a tray; she would then feel for and pick up the food: sometimes she would feel for her mouth and guide it in. At other times she would miss her mouth and get the food over her shoulder, which made her very cross. We find the same feature in disseminated sclerosis, where there is an interrupted communication between the nerve roots in the bulb and the motor centres which ought to act in harmony. In such cases vision plays an important part. Here such aid was absent. The parents used to place her left hand to the mouth, and with the right she would feel the way along her fore arm. In three or four days she began



drawing again, her touch for guiding and copying being more acute than before (see Plates IV., V., and VI. for reproductions of drawings made during this period). On March 25th she left off drawing and took to sewing, working till she was exhausted. She then altered during the next days. For two days her jaws were tightly closed; then she became limp, and had no power in any part. In whatever pose any limb was placed, so it remained. Often she could not swallow, and sometimes she was comatose. This resembled her state during the second week of the influenza, when she was laid out as dead. When she was in one of these exhausted conditions on April 4th, the nurse was in the next room and heard her call out, "What am I in bed for?" Nurse ran to her, and the patient said again, "What am I in bed for? Don't you know I am Nick?"

Nick had left six and a half months before, on September 20th, 1896, at 2 P.M., in the middle of the family dinner downstairs. It was now about two in the afternoon, and also Sunday, and the family were at dinner downstairs. She smelt the dinner, and thought it was the same dinner she had left on September 20th. It was a curious coincidence that both days happened to be Sundays, and the hour the same. She wanted to go down to *finish* her dinner, and said to her parents, "You have been quick in getting my nightgown on. What am I in bed for? I am quite well." She had been so critically ill, half an hour before that, though she was very hungry, they only gave her very little food. In the afternoon she got up, dressed, and walked about, but was weak, not having been able to stand for three weeks (since March 14th).

Two or three features in this incident are very striking. Thus in one personality, B10, she is exhausted and collapsed, with no appetite, hardly able to swallow, and unable to stand. The instant that the new personality B3 is switched on, the exhaustion disappears: she is very hungry, and can walk. Again, whereas B10 could draw beautifully, B3 as "Nick" did not possess the art, and could only make ugly scrawls, and even these were rather forced from her (see Plate VII., Fig. 1).

We always found that the memory of one personality continued from the last appearance of that same personality. There was thus a continuity of the same personality; but

each one was ignorant of every other one. To test this, her father brought out the wigwam toy when she became "Nick." She at once recognised it. It will be remembered that she had it at my house on October 16th, 1896, and changed her personality while playing with it, at the same time throwing it down. She now said, "Oh yes, I remember now; I have been here once since I went to sleep on the Sunday, and I went to sleep again at Dr. Wilson's." The former date was Sunday, September 20th, and the return (at my house) was on October 16th, 1896.

On May 13th, 1897, she changed from "Nick" or B3, to B6 or "good creature." She remembered meeting me in the street on her way from church, and gave the details. It referred to my meeting her on December 27th, 1896, when she was B6. She said now, that to-day was Monday and that yesterday she went to church alone and met me as she came home. Evidently that was the last time she had been B6 or "good creature." I thought there was a mistake on her part, as Sunday was December 29th; but there was no mistake, and the incident as she described it was correct. We found that she remembered nothing after Sunday evening, December 29th, when she had been put to bed early, as she was poorly. A change in personality was developing. This personality could only draw imperfectly, and could not equal the performance of the blind stage (see Plate VII., Fig. 2). After she had drawn a picture we brought her to the normal A, when she expressed surprise, and said she never knew she could draw. "Nick" would not try to draw, except once or twice.

As B6, the "good creature," she went to the Jubilee Procession in June, 1897, and took an intelligent interest in it. One of my assistants, Dr. Taylor, of Perth, who knew her well during the first year, before B6 appeared, saw her there, but she never remembered having seen him before.

Though the date was June 27th, she maintained that it was only about a month since Christmas, the reason being that it was Christmas time when she was last in this B6 personality, and she had now been about five weeks in the same personality. This shows again how each sub-stage is continuous with the same and ignores the intervening events. She also said that she could not understand there being flowers

in January, so near Christmas, and why people would say it was June; that she had never seen the sea, but had heard about it, and would like to go there. She never had been B6 at the seaside. She deeply resented an effort made at this time to get her into a hospital for observation, and as a consequence became very ill and changed to a state of dementia. She declared she was quite well, and resented the idea of the hospital.

Four days later (on June 30th) she changed to "Nick" or B3, about tea time. She at once asked why the lamps were not lit, because when "Nick" left on May 13th it was 9.30 p.m., and the lamps were lit. She also said that her father called Mary Barnes, and so she went to sleep (on May 13th), and woke up to-day (June 30th). She seemed usually to have the idea, when one personality left, that she had gone to sleep: but when she went to sleep on May 13th it was 9.30 p.m., and her father was having his supper. She said when she woke up there was a different tea on the table, and Tom (her father) was gone.

She continued as B3 or "Nick" through August, and went to the same seaside resort as before. She was the same personality as when at the sea the year before, and now learned to swim.

On August 22nd she changed without any physical disturbance to the normal A, and then to "good creature," or B6. She then referred to having seen me with my assistant, Dr. Taylor, and spoke as if this had occurred the previous night, whereas in reality it was on June 25th, on which date B6 had been in evidence. But the memory of her visit to the seaside this month was entirely obliterated. She said that she had never bathed for fear of being drowned.

She argued that she was only two years old (about the length of time B6 had been present), and could not understand people saying she was 15. She only remembered two Christmas days.

In November she had another attack of mania (B1) which lasted a fortnight. Then she became "good creature" again, and remained so until March 24th, 1898, when she altered to the demented state B9. B9 lasted three or four weeks, when she again became B6 or "good creature." We could not now

induce A to return. If her father tried she became unconscious and fell down: so we feel we have said good-bye to the normal "A" or Mary Barnes, and ever since she has been "good creature" or B6. She is intelligent, and has learned typewriting, and is making her own way.

Summing up the relationship of the different stages to one another, we may say that B2 represents a rough child, almost a waif, of 3 or 4 years old. B6 seems like the same child, more advanced in intelligence and refinement, though young for her age. B4 and B8 are like first cousins. B5 and B7 also seem closely related, but complementary to one another, as B7 remembers very remote incidents and B5 only very recent ones. B9 is, I think, an offshoot of B1. B3 and B10 stand by themselves.

About 1900 I met Mary Barnes with her father. Her manner was childish, like that of B6. When I asked her if her name was Mary Barnes, she said she supposed so, as her father said that was her name, and at the present time (February, 1904) she continues to say that she is Mary Barnes.

She is now to all appearances a healthy normal young woman. She is quite intelligent, and all her ideas are refined; but on examination one finds her memory is very bad, and though she remembers as far back as 1898, nearly all her previous life is a blank, including the years before her illness. I tested her memory as to various events which happened in the abnormal stages other than B6, and she had apparently no recollection of them; whereas events which happened in the B6 stage she now remembers. Thus she clearly remembers having seen Dr. Tuckey when she was B6: but she does not remember Dr. R. Jones, or Dr. Savill, Dr. Mickle, Dr. Bramwell, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Tweedy, Dr. (now Sir) T. Barlow, who saw her when she was B2, and B3, and B9. Also she knows a little French, which is as it should be, since B6 was the only personality besides B9 who knew any French. She does not remember the acute illness which started the alternations of personality; nor does she remember her childhood before then. Her father said in 1900 that she did not know her old schoolfellows, and her memory of school was a confused

blank. Of course, many impressions of her childhood have now been revived by intercourse and associations since she became B6; but this, after all, only serves to make her memory of the past even more confused.

#### THEORY OF CEREBRAL CHANGES CONNECTED WITH CHANGES OF PERSONALITY.

Whilst many theories have been suggested to explain the psychical aspect of multiple personality, I am anxious to put forward some evidence of a pathological disturbance of the Sympathetic nervous system, which may throw some light on its physical aspect. To comprehend this subject we must consider some of the facts of brain evolution and development.

The most recent and reliable data we have are due to the researches of Dr. Bolton and Dr. G. A. Watson. Some of their work is at present unpublished, but I have permission to use their results for this paper.

I must first explain that a typical section through the cortex of the brain shows us five distinct layers of different kinds of cells, as indicated in Plate VIII. These layers are only from  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch thick. So they literally resemble the rind or bark of a tree, hence the term "cortex." Under the microscope one sees in them cells of varying shapes giving off fibres. At one time these cells used to be compared to electric batteries, where an impulse passes to a cell by a wire, and the cell discharges force through another wire. The simile remains sufficiently good for purposes of popular demonstration.

It has been shown that the general evolution of the cortex is from within outwards, the inner or deeper layers being the first to be developed, both in the vertebrates as a whole, and also in the individual. Dr. Watson, who has especially studied mammals in this respect, finds that in them the deepest, *i.e.*, the polymorph, layer is highly developed. The higher pyramidal layer (so called from the shape of its cells), which relates to intellect, is comparatively undeveloped. It contains few cells; they are irregularly distributed, and many

of them are of the embryonic type, suggesting possibilities not yet achieved. In the Rabbit, the layer is specially poor; in Carnivora, it is more highly evolved, and in monkeys still more so (see diagram of sections through the cortex of man and of the rabbit, Plate VIII.).

In Man the polymorph layer is much the same as in the lower animals, showing that we are no better equipped than they for a merely animal existence,—this layer being concerned with the instincts for self-preservation, and so on. In extreme dementes, who had lost all their normal instincts, Dr. Bolton found that the polymorph layer was in process of decay.

On the other hand, in passing from the lower animals to man, Dr. Watson found a progressive evolution in the *pyramidal* layer, which is related to intellectual development. Dr. Bolton found this layer very thin and shallow in imbeciles and the first to decay in dementes. It represents the higher intellectual control over the lower strata, which are devoted to the instincts and the senses. But in the human brain, on the more superficial or outer part of this layer, as if suggesting future evolution, there are many rudimentary or half-developed cells of what is called the embryonic type. Dr. Watson considers that this indicates that the human brain has not yet reached its highest development, and is capable of higher evolution, the longer the human race persists. To his opinion I would add the clause: provided our social and educational conditions are improved, especially by putting a check on the drinking habits so prevalent now in all classes, and so potent a cause of nerve degeneration. But whilst offering possibilities of higher education or development, these embryonic cells are likewise the first to decay, being more or less unstable.

Now if we suppose the same general principle of growth that governs the whole cortex to apply also to the pyramidal layer, it will contain, say, 10 strata of cells, of which Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (counting from within outwards or below upwards) are more ancestral or ancient than Nos. 8, 9, and 10, and therefore more stable. Against this, some will argue that at birth all strata are laid down simultaneously. But functionally 8, 9, and 10 are delayed, for they contain many of these embryonic cells, which are not apparent in Nos. 1, 2, and 3, and which in some people continue embryonic in type per-

manently. Also in incipient dementia and in an alcoholic case which I examined, where brain power was failing, it was the top layers, 10, 9, and 8, which were disappearing. In the alcoholic case, these external cells of the pyramidal layer had been destroyed. At the same time the patient had become depraved. Her higher mental ideation or true Ego had disappeared. She had stepped down from her original personality to a much lower grade.

This is an extreme case, but it suggests a physical explanation of mental deterioration and altered personality, with loss of responsibility.

Applying these facts to the case of the B6 personality, then, I would consider that the influenza toxin or the meningitis had damaged the extreme surface or top of the pyramidal layer, and so prevented the higher mental development which occurs between puberty and adolescence. The case now resembles one of neurasthenia. The patient complains of bodily weakness; she soon gets tired; there is loss of memory; brain fog; exhaustion after mental effort, and want of power of application; yet her intelligence and moral faculties are unimpaired. Does not this case throw some light on the condition of neurasthenia, for we know that the latter often occurs through derangement of internal organs which are controlled by the sympathetic nerves? Just as the finger tips in neurasthenic people are benumbed by arrested circulation, so the sympathetic disturbance in the brain circulation may arrest the functional activity of what we may provisionally term the "brain tips," or most distant and external parts of the brain.

The chief features of scientific interest in this case are:

(1) That the normal A was absolutely ignorant of the abnormal B, and, on the whole, *vice versa*, although the abnormal B sometimes showed a glimmer of knowledge of the normal A.

(2) Among the many abnormal sub-stages, each sub-stage was a separate personality, continuous with itself throughout its different appearances, and originally ignorant of every other sub-stage, though sometimes learning a little about the incidents of other stages, probably through hearing conversations.

(3) These personalities were switched on and off without any apparent rhyme or reason. During the process of change

there was generally some physical disturbance, such as shock, pallor or flushing, and alteration of facial expression.

Some would call this a case of somnambulism, and would maintain that the normal A is now merely asleep. This is not my view. I hold that each of the sub-stages is as much an individual or character as the normal A, each of them being merely a fraction of the complete personality or Ego. From this point of view, it seems to me that the case throws new light on the mechanism of the brain, and its relation to mind and personality.

It is generally known that the brain is mapped out into functional areas, viz., Sensory areas receiving impressions of smell, sight, taste, touch, and hearing; also Motor areas to direct the movement of different parts of the body.

There are besides three areas called association centres: the frontal, the temporal, and the parieto-occipital area behind. As the name indicates, these associate or bring into harmonious co-operation the other active nerve groups (see Plate IX., Fig. 1).

The association areas represent the higher intellectual or mental grades, and Dr. Bolton considers that they are the first to decay. These higher centres contain a large proportion of embryonic or rudimentary cells, showing that they are still in process of evolution. Dr. Watson has shown that the cortex of the human and the rabbit's brain are about equal in depth, except in the association areas, which in the rabbit are only half the depth or thickness of similar parts in man.

My hypothesis assumes that the pyramidal layer of the brain may be divided as a whole or in part into "districts." Diagrammatically we may conceive of these districts as being different levels in the cortex, especially in the association areas, the deeper inner ones representing more developed stages than the upper levels, because they are functionally older. Thus we may suppose there is a low level or district corresponding to the age of three or four; higher up would be the district coming into play at the age of twenty; a still higher one would become active at thirty, and so on; each in turn superseding and taking command of the lower districts. In senile decay we see the reverse process occurring; the upper layers decaying



or falling out of use, and the lower ones coming into play again.

Now these different districts may be supposed to correspond to different personalities. As a rule there is no apparent break in character as the individual grows up, because the change from each district to the next is gradual and continuous. But morbid conditions in the brain may throw back the individual to earlier stages, from which he may suddenly revert to others, or the later stages may be prevented by morbid causes from developing.

In the case of Mary Barnes, B1, the stage of mania, might be caused by congestion of the smaller blood-vessels, giving rise to an over-stimulation of the cortex.

In B2 spasm of the anterior cerebral arteries would shut off the frontal association centre, and paralyse the foot (see diagram of arterial blood-supply, Plate IX., Fig. 2). Intellectually B2 was a child of three or four. Though she had a storehouse of words, she could not use them or associate them with their proper meanings.

B4, the deaf-mute stage, might be caused by spasm of the middle cerebral arteries, supplying the centres for hearing and speech—perhaps only on the left or active side.

B7 resembled a state of senile decay. If the recently educated layers were paralysed, the lower cells with their early memories might become active.

B10 is easily explained by the shutting off of the blood supply to the sensory visual apparatus, the psychic visual centre, which has a different blood supply, being undisturbed. Hence she could originate the remarkable pictures described above. B10 gives strong support to my vascular theory.

In B9, where the lower animal instincts prevailed, there was probably uncontrolled activity of the deeper layers of the cortex with temporary paralysis of the upper layers. The theory would support the view that all our bad impulses are relics of our earliest ancestral development; or, in other words, the power of animal instincts and passions over intellect. On the other hand, the present stage of B6, which seems, intellectually at least, to be in some respects more highly developed than the original normal stage A, may only be the normal increase of brain activity during the last three or

four years. We must also remember that B6 is an arrested development. Now in 1904 Mary Barnes is actually 21 years of age, but she is intellectually only about 16 years old. In theory one would expect that the outer, less stable cortical cells, which are also embryonic and poorly developed, have not arrived at their full and normal activity. Vascular changes in the sympathetic might retard their development.

The whole conception is consistent with Mr. Myers's theory of the constitution of the Ego, according to which only a portion of it is manifest to us in our present life. While the whole Ego remains intact, one portion or another may become manifest according to different physical conditions and the environment of the individual, so presenting the appearance of a truncated personality or shifting series of personalities. What has to be attempted, then, in our present life is to facilitate the manifestation of the best personality of each Ego.

If so be that the mind comprises so many personalities, good, bad, and indifferent, does it not shed light on the duties of those who have the training of the young?

This case having led us to the belief that the varying personalities may to some extent be explained by a fuller knowledge of the structure of the brain cortex, also throws new light on the psychical question of habit.

The more recent ideas on habit are that it represents the path of least resistance along nerve channels. It is thought that constant use overcomes nerve resistance both in the fibres and at the junctions or synapses of the different neurones.

This theory is based on the knowledge that sensory tracts leading to the brain do not become active or insulated (myelinated) until stimulated from without. It is, however, contrary to the laws of conductivity and resistance in copper and other metals.

But if we consider habits involving skill, such as writing or piano playing or carving, are we to suppose that the optic nerves conduct better after two or more years' practice? Is it not rather that the visuo-psychic areas are more educated? Do the nerves from the cortical motor areas really conduct to the hand and fingers with more facility after years of practice? Or are not the motor cells more educated, and does not their increased functional activity direct and originate the more complex movements?

If my view be correct, habit is of the same nature as a personality. Habit may be regarded, then, as belonging to a brain area or district, or as a personality which is specially educated at some period of life. When the higher Ego is feeble or inactive, habits of lower type and absence of skill obtain. It is only by close attention or the influence of the highest intellect that good and skilled habits develop, which place the personality in a higher sphere of life.

This subject merits the attention of those who have to educate the young, and aid them in the formation of character, which is perhaps but a personality.

In science we speak of the mind possessing the power of inhibition. In popular language we call it self-control, or the power to resist immediate gratification for the sake of future good. But do we resist evil? or do we not rather flee from it and turn our backs on it? An evil personality may be tending to get the upper hand. Should we allow it to remain and fight it? or should not the process rather be that of striving to pass to another and nobler personality? Rather than a mere negative inhibition, is it not a power of switching off the vital current from the bad district or personality, and turning it into a more desirable channel?

If we go among the masses we find adverse circumstances working terrible havoc among the children, such as bad air, malnutrition, sickness from improper exposure, brain attacks, or meningitis, fits, and above all, bad heredity due to drunken parents. The children that survive are liable to become abnormal, even degenerate and criminal. But we cannot regard them as fully responsible for their actions and tendencies. We have to remember that they have never had a fair chance of developing their normal personality or their highest Ego. Circumstances over which they have no control have switched them on to a wrong path physically at the beginning of their lives, and prevented them from acquiring the self-control of the properly civilised man.

The case I have described illustrates the dependency of the mind on the body. From this we may infer the impossibility of overcoming adverse physical conditions after they have reached a certain point and with this fact before us, it follows that our first duty to the race is to attempt to

ameliorate those social conditions which now so largely handicap it.

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### APPENDIX I.

#### WRITINGS OF THE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a selection from some of the letters written by the different personalities :

(1)

[To her father : written forwards by B2, January 28th, 1896.]

My own dear farser,

ou is de very best darlint in all de weald dere is no vone in de weald like you ou is doing to have a bath ~~✓~~vitch I hope ou vill enjoy ve did go to see de dear doctor Vilson and lady Vilson but dey was jist doing out so I could oney just peak to dem Goodbye my dardint

~~✓~~ou's oving ittle

daughter Good SHRINE.

(2)

[To Dr. Wilson ; written backwards by B2, March 18th, 1896.]

the nice doctor

if you is coming to see me to night i wull be good if you do not hit a fing on me you was a bit naughty when you did that you know old jim did not do that. the dear tom and mary ann say you is a nice man and i say you is and every body else

(3)

[To Dr. Wilson, to whom she now applied the name she had before given to a doctor who had attended her during the influenza ; written backwards by B2, November 1st, 1896, during the mania state.]

My dear old jim

you may expect a good old blowing up for not coming to see me today i was going to give you a grape but I wont now because you are a very wicked boy not to come and see me

good thing

<sup>1</sup> For reproductions of some of the writings and drawings see Plates I.-VII.

(4)

[To Dr. Wilson ; written forwards by B2, probably  
in February, 1897.]

For the new jim or rather the gentleman who says he is a jim  
and who says he is jims brother but he is not because he has not  
got a gammy leg and my jim was only a lean short man and this  
one is a big tall man

good thing to Jim

(5)

[Postcard written by B3, addressed to her father,  
from M——, August 7th, 1896.]

My Pet

I wish you would bring those oil skins down with you as  
we have spoken to a boatman about them and he knows how to  
cure them and will be glad of them Mr. Hanley our boatman  
Goodbye dear I shall soon see my darling God bless him

Old Nick

(6)

[To Dr. Wilson ; written by B3, August 26th, 1896.]

M——, Essex.

Dear Sir,

Just a line to tell you I am not in L—— but at M——  
with my dear old Tom.

I am very sorry I did not write you the Post card you asked  
me to but I went away on the Saturday and quite forgot all  
about it but I know you will forgive me and I hope this will do  
as well.

The dear doctor Wilson I am enjoying myself lovely with boat-  
ing bathing and paddling going on.

The dear old Tom and me are just going out to get the dinner  
so I have not any more time to say any more but I remain

Your ever loving

Old Nick.

in Haste.

(7)

[Written by B3. Received April 6th, 1897; see above, p. 376.]

In Bed

3 hours after I woke up

My dear Dr. Wilson

I am writing you a few lines to let you know Poor old NICK has woke up I will tell you all about it I woke up all at once at about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 2 o'clock & found myself in bed with the room all dark & with my night dress on & with Bottles on the drawers & all kinds of things that people would have if they were ill. I was all by myself & the place dreadfully quiet so I called out "Why have you put me in bed" then I really had to laugh till the tears ran down my cheeks because it was so strange and funny. Then Tom & Munger & Giggler came in all looking dazed & Frightened & I was so surprised that we did not know what to say for quite a little while. Do you know I felt so strange because I went to sleep in September & now they tell me it is April 1897 instead of September 1896. I cant make it out I dont know that I can believe but that it is the same day as when I went to sleep because you know I went to sleep on Sunday at the same time as I woke up. I went to sleep you know when we were having dinner one Sunday & I woke up on sunday when they were having the same dinner you know Mutton & Potatoes & greens all the very same except Fruit Pudding it seems so funny to go to sleep such a very long time Every thing was the same except I was in bed all cuddled up in wraps & Hot water bottle at my feet & every think so funny. I feels quite strong & cannot make out why I am in bed. But I am going to get up tomorrow I feel so very disapointed you are away but I hope very much you are enjoying your self & that you will soon behome because I have gallons of news to tell you.

I have done you a drawing and I am sending it to you with 2 of the others that another critter tom Tells me did for you while I have been asleep I will tell you that there are a whole Pile of Drawings here that she has done for you & there are 2 beautiful Pictures here that she has done for you Proper Pictures I mean with ladies & Birds & Trees & Fence all colored in too you know [see Plate IV. for reproduction of picture referred to].

I have a little more to tell you & that is that — came for a few minutes almost directly after I woke up. I think I can tell you no more until you come home

I remain your Loving little Friend

Poor old NICK

(8)

[Written by B3.]

Aug. 12th, 1897.

Dear Dr. Wilson,

I daresay you will be surprised to hear that I am in M—— and am enjoying myself exceedingly. You told me you kept the other letters I sent you so I thought I would send you another as I want to tell you how I can swim and float and dive. I go in the water nearly every day for I like being in the water very much indeed. Dear Dr. Wilson last time I saw you, you were in your carriage, and you had Mrs. Wilson with you and she had some thing on her eye and I want to know if she has hurt it very much and if it is better I do hope so. We have been in M—— nearly a fortnight now and we have got to go home at the end of next week.

Hoping you are quite well

Your sincere little friend

Old NICK.

(9)

[Written by B6.]

2nd June, [1898].

Dear Dr. Wilson

I am writing you a letter to tell you how I am enjoying myself in M——. It is such a glorious place I have never been to such a lovely place before. [see B3's letters of Aug. 26th, 1896, and Aug. 12th, 1897, written from M——]

We are having such dreadfully bad weather here, we have hardly had a fine day yet, and it is that bitterly cold here, that I have not been able to bathe.

Tomadod said that if I went in perhaps I should have a very great breckart and then get drowned so that he could never see me any more. I have not given up all hopes of going in the water yet as Munger says that if a very very warm fine day was to

come she would let me go in I should so love to go in because I believe I can swim and yet cannot be quite sure until I have tried. Dear Dr. Wilson I have enjoyed myself so much this Whitsun for on Monday we went out all day to a beautiful place called Mill Beach and on Tuesday we went for a drive but it came on to rain in the afternoon very badly I think this is all I have to say so

Goodbye your ever loving little friend

CRITTER BARNES.

[Correct surname given in original.]

(10)

[Written by B6 October 9th, 1898.]

Dear Dr. Wilson

I daresay you will be very much surprised to hear that I am staying in Suffolk for another Holiday I daresay this will be the last this summer so I am going to stay for a fortnight or a little over. I am enjoying myself immensely and I went blackberrying this morning and I daresay I gathered two or three lbs. I am staying with one of Mother's friends she is such a nice lady and she keeps a farm house there are plenty of Horses Ducks Chickens Pigs Bullocks Etc and I am feeling A1 and I am getting quite a country girl I shall soon know how to feed chickens and all kinds of things. I think this is all at present so Goodbye Hoping you are quite well

I remain yours Truly

M. BARNES.

[Correct initials and surname given in original.]

(11)

[To her father; written backwards by B9, October 12th, 1896.]

the dear tomadod just a line to you to tell you how much I wish you was here. I hope there is something in your pocket to night I remain yours truly

I dont know who I am so I cant Put my name

(12)

[Another letter written backwards on the same day, October 12th, 1896, was as follows:]

My dear tom

I have just got up. I hope you are not worried. I shall be glad when you come home so you can give me some browns.



(13)

[Letter addressed by B9 on November 22nd, 1896, to Dr. Wilson, to whom the name "Jim" had been transferred at this stage. It refers to the incident of B2 having a tooth extracted early in the same month. This letter was written forwards.]

The dear Jim

I thought I would write you just a line to let you know I really do begin to like you very much, after what you did to me three Tuesdays ago. You know what I mean when you brought that other naughty wicked man in your beautiful carriage. I can assure you I wish he was here now so that I could fight him like he fought me.

I remain Your little friend

THE DREADFUL WICKED CREATURE.

The Jim.

(14)

[To Dr. Wilson; written by B10.]

Februgesy the fourteenth  
18 ninty seven  
Sunday

The dear voice I am writting a letter to tell you lots of things you come to see me last night and I was so jedfulls pleased and I did like the doctor Cross. when I went out this morning I was listening all the time to see if I could hear you but I couldnt and I shall like to go there to London soon because I like to ride quick goodby dear voice I hope I shall soon see you I am the Toms lamb and I have nearly made that sock what I showed you Goodbye dear voice

TOMS LAMB

Febugesy

(15)

[Written by B6 in March, 1904.]

Dear Dr. Wilson,

I am writing to say that I shall be able to keep appointment for next Monday, if you will write me full particulars.

Thanking you very much for all your kindness,

Believe me yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS ON THE WRITINGS AND DRAWINGS OF THE  
SECONDARY PERSONALITIES.

BY ALICE JOHNSON.

The letters and drawings of the different personalities of Mary Barnes show in many respects curious analogies with the trance or automatic performances of mediums. It often happens with mediums who write automatically that the handwriting differs from their ordinary hand and varies greatly at different times, and often the different handwritings are associated with different supposed "controls." Sometimes, even, the handwriting resembles more or less closely that of some deceased person who is thought to be controlling (*e.g.* in the case of Mlle. Hélène Smith, who wrote signatures resembling those found in some old documents, as recorded by Prof. Flournoy in *Des Indes à la Planète Mars*, p. 409; and in a case occurring among the trance phenomena of Mrs. Thompson described in the *Proceedings*, Part XLVII., pp. 235-243). I need not here discuss the question—which must obviously depend on the circumstances of each particular case—whether such resemblance affords evidence of the agency of the deceased person; but the fact of the variety of handwriting being found in a case of secondary personality shows that for this feature, at least, we need not seek for a cause outside the individuality of the writer. It affords, in fact, another link between the phenomena of trance and of secondary personality.

For this reason it seems worth while to analyse the writings of Mary Barnes in some detail, and in order that the reader may follow the description, several specimens taken from the letters quoted above in full are here reproduced.

Several distinct styles of handwriting are shown which, however, are not consistent in their connection with the different personalities. The principal styles are as follows:—

(1) The backwards writing in which, while the whole runs from left to right, each word is written from right to left. Both B2 and B9 at first wrote in this way (see reproductions in Plate I. and Plate III., Fig. 1). Indications of the

way the writing was done may be seen in three cases in which the last letter or letters of a word were first written and then crossed out, and followed by the whole word (see "gt" for "night" in Plate I., and "n" for "in" and "ur" for "your" in Plate III., Fig. 1). The backwards writing of B2 was closely similar to that of B9, but when they wrote forwards in the ordinary manner, their writings were quite different. The forwards writing of B2 in letter (4) is very much like her backwards writing, but more regular; in letter (1) her writing is like that of B7, to be next described.

(2) Writing of B7. This is a fully formed but uneducated-looking hand, characterised by superfluous tags at the beginnings and superfluous flourishes at the ends of words; also by the individual letters being compressed from side to side, while the strokes joining them are disproportionately drawn out. The same characteristics are found in much of the writing of the blind B10.

(3) Writing of B3. There are several different specimens of this, the earliest being the postcard addressed to her father on August 7th, 1896, and quoted above. In this the style is much more childish than that of B7, but contains slight traces both of the flourishes and of the compression of the letters found in the latter style. The writing is very careless and irregular. The next specimen was the letter written to Dr. Wilson soon after, on August 26th, 1896, evidently written with much more care. B9's letter (No. 13), written forwards on November 22nd, 1896, is very similar to the third specimen of B3, which was written on April 4th, 1897, and part of which is reproduced in Plate II., Fig. I. This is a clear round childish writing, containing a rather peculiar form of the letter "k" which does not occur in any other of the writings. The latest specimen of B3 is dated August 12th, 1897. It retains the round childish character, each letter being formed with care and correctness, but the capital "D's" take on the form of those of B6 (see Plate II., Fig. 2) in that the return upward stroke stops short of the initial downward stroke. The whole writing of B3, in fact, is similar to the early writings of B6, as may be seen by comparing (1) and (2) on Plate II. Later B6 writes more flowingly and the letters become less correctly formed, the style developing into that shown in Plate III., Fig. 2.

(4) Writing of B10. This varies a good deal. The earliest specimens are dated January 3rd, 1897 (the B10 personality having first appeared on December 29th, 1896); some of these resemble planchette writing, being large and sprawling and characterless; other parts are like the writing of B7, already described; in others again the letters are long and sloping, like the writing reproduced in Plate II., Fig. 3, which was done a few weeks later, on February 14th, when she could see a very little, whereas at the beginning of January she was quite blind.

With regard to the contents of these writings a few points may be noted:

B2's first letter to her father (No. 1 above) dated January 28th, 1896, shows an excessively—not to say artificially—childish style of phonetic spelling; it is noteworthy that in two cases a word is begun with the right spelling and then the correct initial letter is crossed out, and the word finally spelt wrong;—she begins to spell “which” with a “w,” then crosses it out and writes “vitch”; and later on begins “your” with a “y,” then crosses it out and writes “ou’s.” The whole performance suggests not so much a child as an elder person imagining herself to be a child; as if the normal consciousness were deliberately, and not quite successfully, trying to suppress itself to give full play to the dramatic instincts of the subliminal. So little, indeed, in this case was the normal consciousness submerged that it cropped up spontaneously and required no external suggestion or artifice to elicit it, such as was used in the incident of the correct counting to which Mr. Piddington has drawn attention (see below, p. 411) when B10 could only count 1, 2, 1, 2; but was suddenly surprised into counting up to 5.

In a piece of writing by B7 there are indications of the opposite extreme, explicit knowledge being shown of a fact which the normal Mary Barnes had probably forgotten, or perhaps never consciously known. B7 wrote:

March 16th, 1895.

The dear old Dada and Mother. The dear old Doctor H—. The dear old doctor G—. The dear doctor Wilson. The dear old nurse who came from the Union to nurse mama when she had diptheiria.

MISS MLARIAN BARNET.

The date given at the top of this writing was incorrect; it was really written on May 13th, 1896, on the back of a ticket for a public meeting at the Mansion House on May 12th, 1896. March 16th, 1895, was before the illness which started the series of varying personalities, and the mention of this date is perhaps another indication of the fact that the memory of B7 included incidents in the life of the normal personality A. This extended memory is shown in the interesting reference to her mother's illness which occurred when Mary Barnes was under two years old; in the reference to her parents as such, instead of as Tom and Mary Ann; in the use of the correct names of the doctors; and again in the signature "Miss Mlarian Bearnet,"<sup>1</sup> an obvious variant of the real name.

It may be remembered that Ansel Bourne adopted during his secondary personality a similar variant of his real name, calling himself A. J. Brown.

At a later stage, B6 signed herself "Critter Barnes," but only after she had been taught what her real surname was. Finally she dropped the "Critter," and used her proper signature, after having been taught it.

The drawings illustrate the development of faculties latent in the normal personality, and it is curious, though (as Mr. Piddington points out, p. 408) not without parallel, that they began in the blind stage, B10.

B10 having first appeared on December 29th, 1896, began to draw on January 3rd, 1897, when completely blind, and a large number of drawings were executed on that day. The first ones represent faces, drawn on a large scale and in bold outlines. Dr. Wilson notes that to produce these she felt her own face, and then drew her pictures by touch. The first of all is drawn in profile, the length of the face being about 5 inches. There are also four large full-face drawings, closely resembling one another, the faces being from 8 to 9 inches long. Next comes a half-length figure—apparently of a man—and another large profile face, with very elaborate head gear. After this, the fashion-plate type shown in Plate V. predominates, and there are about half-a-dozen half or full

<sup>1</sup> The signature actually written was as much like the real name as "Mlarian Bearnet" is like "Mary Barnes."

length figures of elaborately-dressed ladies—one, marked "Bride," with a veil, others with elaborate coiffures, and one with a hat and veil. In this last case, the veil is described as added after the rest of the figure was drawn. A note on it states that, as she could not see, she asked for her forefinger to be placed on the neck of the figure, and then drew a veil in the correct position. On one of the other drawings, it is noted that her father moved the paper as she was in the middle of drawing, so that the skirt was drawn at a considerable distance from the upper part of the figure. Dr. Wilson states that later on her sense of touch became much more acute, so that, if the paper was moved while she was in the middle of drawing, she could find out for herself, by feeling it, where to continue the lines.

These early drawings are mixed up with a good deal of writing, either mere lists of names and words, or apparently casual remarks,—possibly referring to conversations going on around her,—or fragmentary reminiscences of music-hall songs, such as the following:

Dear Father

I want some pudding

Toms Lamb

She was a dear little dickey Bird

Chip, Chip, Chip she went

Sweetly she sang to me till all my money was spent

She went of song we parted on fighting terms

For she was one of the eary birds and I was one of the worms.

We will retire to the other room for a short interval to discuss  
nessessary matters

Old SAM.

The writing, both in form and contents, strongly resembles the elementary stages of automatic writing with which psychological researchers are familiar.

A series of pictures executed about a month later are much better drawn; the faces are more correct, and have a certain variety of expression, though fundamentally similar and all in profile. The figures, again, are of the fashion-plate type. They are drawn in pencil and coloured with chalks. At this time B10 had begun to recover her sight, but was extremely short-sighted, not being able to see anything clearly more than about three inches from her eyes (see Dr. Tweedy's report).

Her habit of occasionally holding up the crayons to her eye, so close that they sometimes touched the cornea, suggested, however, that for practical purposes she could not see at all, and Dr. Wilson thought that these drawings, too, were really executed by touch. It was a significant feature of this condition that the cornea was completely insensitive, as sometimes occurs with subjects in a deep state of trance.

Later in February, as described in Dr. Wilson's account, the B6 or B2 personality appeared again; but in the middle of March the imbecile state, B10, returned, and was even worse than before, being paralysed, blind, deaf, and dumb. Her sense of touch in guiding the pencil and copying was now even more acute than before, and the drawings were still better executed. It is to this period that the two drawings reproduced on Plates V. and VI. belong. The one given on Plate IV. belongs to a slightly earlier period, March 7th to 14th, when B10 was alternating with B2, and it shows more imagination and power of composition than any of the other specimens.

#### DIARY OF APPEARANCES OF DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES.

A = Normal state.	B4—Deaf and dumb.
B = Abnormal state, of which there were ten varieties, as follows :	B5—Thinks herself only 3 days old.
B1—Mania of 3rd and 4th weeks of the acute illness.	B6—"Pretty dear," "good creature," or "Tom's darling."
B1 <sup>a</sup> —Coma cephalgia of the 2nd and 3rd weeks of illness in 1895.	B7—"Adjucose Uneza."
B2—Childish ; "a thing," "good thing."	B8—Thinks she was only born last night.
B3—"Nick."	B9—Various degeneracies, "dreadful wicked creature."
	B10—Blind, and draws; "Tom's Lamb."

In the following table, the first appearance of each personality is indicated by the black type. When no date is given, the personality is continued from the last date mentioned. Details of A are given separately below.

1895.	May 20-26, .	<b>B2</b>
Easter, . . . Influenza.	May and June } .	<b>B2</b>
	to July 20, }	
Ap. 21-May 5, . <b>B1<sup>a</sup></b> .	July 20-23, .	<b>B2</b>
May 6-19, . . <b>B1</b> .	July 24-Aug. 8, .	<b>B3</b>

Aug. 8, . . . **B4**.  
 Aug. and Sept. . . **B4** and **B2**.  
 Oct. and Nov. . . **B4** for 14 days  
 and **B2**.  
 Oct. 27, . . . 1st tooth extrac-  
 tion. **B2**.  
 to Nov. 26, . . . **B2**.  
 Nov. 26 to Dec. 20 **B5**.  
 Dec. 20 to Jan. . . **B1**.

## 1896.

Jan. 12 . . . **B1**, **B1<sup>a</sup>**.  
 Jan. 14-Feb. 7, . . **B2**.  
 Jan. 22, . . . Shown at Clinical  
 Society. **B2**.  
 Feb. 7, . . . **B1** and **B1<sup>a</sup>**.  
 Feb. 9-22, . . . **B2**. Seen by  
 Dr. Savill.  
 Feb. 26, . . . Seen by Drs. Jones,  
 Meikle, Bramwell,  
 Barrett as **B2**.  
 Mar. 1, . . . **B2** changing to **B1**.  
 Mar. 1-4, . . . **B1** and **B2**.  
 Mar. 6, . . . **B1**, finally **B2**.  
 Mar. 7, . . . **B2**.  
 Mar. 7-18, . . . **B2**, **B1<sup>a</sup>** for  
 half hour.  
 Mar. 18-27, . . . **B2**, **B1<sup>a</sup>** for  
 half hour.  
 to Apr. 4, . . . **B2**, convulsions.  
 Apr. 18-23, . . . **B3**.  
 Apr. 23, . . . **B2**.  
 May 5, . . . **B1<sup>a</sup>**.  
 May 6, . . . **B6**.  
 May 7, . . . **B2**.  
 May 11, . . . **B1<sup>a</sup>**.  
 May 12, . . . **B6** and **B7**.  
 May 17-30, . . . **B7** leaving,  
**B2** coming.  
 May 31, . . . **B2** and **B7**.  
 June 7-13, . . . **B7-B6-B2**.  
 June 14-20, . . . **B4-B6**.  
 June 20, . . . Convulsions, **B6**.  
 June 21-24, . . . **B3**.  
 June 24-30, . . . **B7** and **B9**.  
 July 3, . . . **B6**. Dr. Tuckey's visit.  
 July 6, . . . **B6-B2**.  
 July 8, . . . **B3**.

(Paralysed in legs from May  
 31 to July 8.)

to Aug. 1, . . . **B3**.  
 July 18 and } **B1** for few minutes.  
 Aug. 8, }  
 Aug. 1-Sept. 20, . . **B3**.  
 Sept. 20, . . . **B6**.  
 Sept. 26, . . . **B3** and **B6**.  
 Oct. 10, . . . **B6**, **B7**, **B9**.  
 Oct. 10-16, . . . **B9**.  
 Oct. 16, . . . **B9**, **B3** for half hour.  
 Oct. 17, . . . " "  
 Oct. 18-30, . . . **B9**.  
 Oct. 31, . . . **B1**.  
 Nov. 1-20, . . . **B2**. 2nd tooth  
 extraction.  
 Nov. 20-Dec. 10, . . **B9** and **B2**.  
 Dec. 10, . . . **B6**.  
 Dec. 29, . . . **B6-B9**.  
 Dec. 29, . . . **B10**.

## 1897.

Jan. 31, . . . **B10**. Seen by Dr.  
 Enraght.  
 Feb. 13, . . . **B10**. Seen by Dr.  
 Cross.  
 Feb. 26, . . . Gradually **B6** or **B2**.  
 Shown at Clinical Society.  
 March 14, . . . **B10**.  
 Mar. 25-Apr. 4, **B10** with coma.  
 April 4, . . . **B3**.  
 May 3, . . . **B3**. Seen by Dr. Cross.  
 May 12, . . . **B3**.  
 May 13-June 26, . . **B6**.  
 June 26-30, . . . **B1**. Seen by  
 Dr. Barlow.  
 June 30, . . . **B3**.  
 Aug. 22, . . . **B6**.  
 Nov. 9, . . . **B6**.  
 Nov. 9-19, . . . **B1<sup>a</sup>**.  
 Nov. 20, . . . **B6**.

## 1898.

to March 24, . . . **B6**.  
 March 24-31 } like **B9** and **B1<sup>a</sup>**.  
 to Apr. 10, }  
 April 7-10, . . . Changing to **B6**.  
 From this date, viz. three  
 years after the illness began,  
**B6** continued for the next six  
 years, up to the present date,  
 1904, and seems now to have  
 become permanent.



## DIARY OF APPEARANCES OF THE NORMAL STATE A.

1895.

- May 20. . . . B2 arrives. A comes for 2 to 6 or 7 hours.  
 July 6. . . . A less frequent and shorter, appears only 3 or 4 times, and lasts 5 minutes to 2 hours.  
 Aug. 8. . . . A comes more often, but not for longer periods.  
 Oct. 27. . . . A less frequent ; may be absent for 2 or 3 days. Father can call A back.  
 Dec. 20 . . . . A very irregular. Perhaps once a day or misses 3 or 4 days, and only comes for a few minutes at a time.

1896.

- Jan. 13. . . . A came back at 3 A.M., and twice at 8 and 9 A.M.  
 Jan. 18. . . . A came lately many times, but for a few minutes only.  
 Jan. 26 to Feb. 1. . . A came only once, and for 10 minutes.  
 Feb. 2 to Feb. 8. . . A came only once, and for 2 minutes.  
 Feb. 9 to Feb. 15. . . A did not come once.  
 Feb. 16 to Feb. 22. . . A came only twice, for a minute.  
 Feb. 28. . . . A came four or five times, once for half an hour.  
 Mar. 7. . . . A came several times, once for twenty minutes.  
 Mar. 8 to 14. . . . Frequently normal. Her father brings A back by cuddling.  
 Mar. 20 to 21. . . . Frequently A.  
 Mar. 27. . . . Seldom A.  
 Mar. 29 to Apr. 4. . . Seldom A.  
 Apr. 5 to 11. . . . Not once A.  
 Apr. 12 to Apr. 18. . . Not once A.  
 Apr. 19 to 25. . . . Not once A.  
 May 1. . . . A for 1 hour.  
 May 2 to 9. . . . Not once A.  
 May 17 to 30. . . . Very seldom A.  
 June 7 to 13. . . . A comes often ; may be able to walk or may be paralysed.  
 June 13. . . . A for 2 hours.

- July 3. . . . . A came for half an hour. Has been absent many days.
- July 7. . . . . A came for 1 minute.
- July 19 to Aug. 1. . . A comes only for a moment, and is brought by caressing.
- Aug. 18. . . . . A is only brought by caressing.
- Aug. 23 to Sep. . . . A comes frequently for about 2 minutes in a particular road at——.
- Sep. 4 and 5. . . . . A comes often after bathing, often for 10 minutes, once for an hour and a half.
- Sep. 6 to 19. . . . . A not often.
- Oct. and Nov. . . . . A is very rare, and can only be brought by caressing.
- Dec 27. . . . . A comes nearly every day since 11th for 3 or 4 minutes, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes brought by caressing.

## 1897.

- Jan. 14. . . . . A came for 4 minutes during the blind stage.
- Jan. 16 and 23. . . . A came 3 or 4 times for a few minutes; and momentarily on several other days towards the end of January.
- Jan. 31. . . . . A came when blind, being induced by use of the ophthalmoscope.
- Feb. and Mar. . . . . A almost entirely absent.
- May 3. . . . . A will not come now, not even in place where she used to come in a certain road. Resists her father's calling.
- May 13. . . . . A came after B3, and was succeeded by B6.
- June, July, and Aug.] A almost always absent now. The patient was at ——, but A came very seldom.
- Aug. 22. . . . . A came once for 4 minutes.
- Oct. 30. . . . . I tried to photograph A, but failed.

## 1898.

- Mar. 24. . . . . A practically gone. If A is called, the patient resists and strikes out.
- May 24. . . . . When father calls A, the patient falls down unconscious.

## DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Plates I.-III. Reproductions of handwritings of the different personalities.

*Plate I.*

Writing by B2. In the original each word was written backwards, *i.e.* from right to left.

*Plate II.*

(1) Writing by B3, (2) by B6, (3) by B10.

*Plate III.*

(1) Writing by B9 (in the original each word was written backwards), (2) writing by B6, in March, 1904.

Plates IV.-VI. Reproductions of drawings by the different personalities.

*Plate IV.*

Drawing by the blind personality, B10, during the week March 7th to 14th, 1897; reduced from the original, which is 17 ins. by 11½ ins.

*Plate V.*

Drawing by the blind personality, B10, on March 18th, 1897; reduced from the original, which is about 6 ins. by 10 ins.

*Plate VI.*

Drawing by B10 on March 22nd, 1897, reduced from the original, which is about 6 ins. by 10 ins.; intended to represent the nurse who attended her in that stage, but not at all like her. The nurse said she would like to be drawn holding a bottle in her hand; so B10 asked to be allowed to feel the bottle, and then drew it. She made five other drawings on the same day.

*Plate VII., Fig. 1.*

Drawing by B3 or "Nick." This took two days to do—April 11th and 12th, 1897.

*Plate VII., Fig. 2.*

Drawing by B6, or "Good Creature," on May 13th, 1897. When she drew this, she burst out laughing at the picture "Nick" had drawn on April 11th and 12th.

*Plate VIII.*

Diagram of sections through the cortex of the human and the rabbit's brain, reproduced by the courtesy of Dr. G. A. Watson. The cortex in both is divided into five layers (marked here I, II, III, IV, V) which develop from below upwards. At birth all layers are already formed. The deepest layer (V) is called the polymorphic from the varying shapes of its cells. It is the first to develop, and with layer IV appears about the sixth month of foetal life. The pyramidal (II) and other layers appear about the 7th to 8th month of foetal life. They are then about three-quarters of their depth in the adult. At birth the polymorphic and layer IV are not quite their final thickness, while the granular layer (III) is only three-quarters of its final thickness, and the pyramidal layer only one half. These details illustrate the fact that the course of development is from below upwards or from within outwards. We can, therefore, safely infer that the functional activity of the layers comes into play in the same order.

The polymorphic layer is as large or thick in animals as in man. In this diagram it is seen to be even thicker in the rabbit than in man. For the rabbit has but little intelligence, and therefore has to rely on well-developed instincts.

The granular layer (III) does not demand special notice here. It receives impressions from the sensory organs.

The pyramidal layer (II) is the most important one for us to consider here. It is the last to develop, and the first to go in dementia. It also decays first on the outer surface, for in this part many of the cells have not reached perfection, being of the type called embryonic.

Compare the depth of this layer in the normal human brain as shown in the diagram (.86 mm.) with its depth in the rabbit (.14 mm.). It is thus six times as thick in the human as in the rabbit's brain, which alone indicates an enormous difference in intellectual power.

*Plate IX. Fig. 1.*

Right side of the brain, showing the association and sensori motor areas of the cortex. M is the motor area. The foot centre is at the top, and the lips and speech centres at the bottom; other centres intervene. H points to the centre of hearing; V to the sensori-visual centre, that is, the centre where the images of objects seen and focussed by the eye acting as a photographic camera are, so to speak, finally developed or perceived. In the blind imbecile the pyramidal layer is here undeveloped and thin (according to Bolton).

The clear spaces P, OT and F represent the association areas, which associate the impressions received in the sensory areas for purposes of higher mentation.

Drs. G. A. Watson and J. S. Bolton regard the visuo-sensory area (V) as of relatively little psychic value, comparing its development in the human and other "seeing" animals with the much larger visual psychic or association area (P) which surrounds the visuo-sensory.

In this visuo-psychic area all sight impressions are stored and analysed. In copying or drawing from a copy or painting from nature, the image of the object is focussed by the eye, which is like a camera, with the retina as a screen. From the eye the image is impressed on the visuo-sensory area (V) and thence it is analysed and stored in the association centre P. From the visuo-psychic area (P) messages for guidance as to the form and colour of the drawing are sent to the hand centre in M.

*Plate IX., Fig. 2.*

Right side of the brain, showing the arterial blood supply. There are three areas, marked PC, MC and AC, supplied by three arteries. Posteriorly (PC) the blood supply comes from the posterior cerebral, a branch of the vertebral artery. Anteriorly, and along the top of the brain (including the foot centre) in the region marked AC, the blood supply comes from the anterior cerebral artery. In the middle region marked MC, which includes the large motor area, and also the hearing and taste centres, the blood supply is from the middle cerebral artery. The two last are both branches of the carotid artery. But all these arteries intermingle in the capillaries. The anterior association centre, which is the highest psychic centre, is supplied by the anterior cerebral artery. The posterior association or visuo-psychic centre is supplied by the posterior cerebral artery. The middle cerebral artery divides up into many arteries supplying several different centres. Thus speech and hearing may be shut off by one large branch being narrowed; the optic mechanism by another, the hands by another, and the legs by another.

## APPENDIX II.

## LETTER FROM MR. PIDDINGTON TO DR. WILSON.

Since reading your paper, I have noted a few resemblances, and also one or two differences, between the case of Mary Barnes and other cases of dual or multiple personality.

Some years ago I read at one of the meetings of the S.P.R. Dr. Morton Prince's preliminary report on the "Beauchamp" case; and I well remember how, at the close of the meeting, a lady member of our Society asked me what I thought of the paper; and how, after, I suppose, I had made some *banal* reply such as: "It's very interesting," she retorted: "Well, I don't believe a word of it!"

Now, although I do not imagine that many of your audience the other night, or that many of your future readers will share this lady's scepticism, and although your case is not such a "tall" one as Dr. Morton Prince's, still some amount of incredulity is not unnatural when people learn of these things for the first time and are unacquainted with the literature of the subject. Nor do I imagine that scepticism in the matter would be entirely confined to the lay reader, but might be found even in the ranks of your own profession.

If, then, some undesigned coincidences can be shown to exist between your case and other recorded cases of a similar type, they might serve as an "aid to faith"; and in any case the comparison may have some little interest even for those who readily accept the facts.

I think I am justified in speaking of the coincidences as undesigned for two reasons. In the first place because, as I think any fair-minded critic will allow, it is ridiculous to suppose that a girl of the age, station in life, and education of Mary Barnes could or would have read up the subject of multiple personality, and on the strength of her acquired knowledge have maintained a plausible and wearisome imitation of this form of mental instability during several years.

In the second place, because the appearance of the coincidental symptoms cannot be ascribed to your suggestion; and this for the very good reason that, although you were, of course, aware of the alleged existence of cases of dual personality, you were not, as I know from your own assurance, acquainted with the details—nor, for that matter, even with the broad outlines—of the classical cases of alternating personality. And it is to coincidences in little details and not to the salient points of resemblance, such for instance as the epileptiform attacks, or the mutually exclusive memories of the various personalities, that I refer.

The coincidences are not many; but then I do not pretend to have made an exhaustive list, for my collation has been little better than cursorily made; and, moreover, the recorded cases of dual and multiple personality are not numerous, and but two have been described with anything approaching even tolerable adequacy. Not that I imagine that such cases are really so very rare; but that their apparent rarity is due to the rarity of intelligent observers. This infrequency of recorded cases, however, helps my argument; for it leaves only a narrow field for chance coincidence to disport itself in, and if the resemblances cannot be assigned to chance or design, then it is reasonable to attribute them to some common spontaneous cause which is at work in all the cases; or, in other words, they tell against the view that the phenomena are spurious.

This is a very long overture to a very small body of facts, but I want to explain the object which I have in view in comparing the case of Mary Barnes with others.

The case may be compared:

(1) With that of Mary Reynolds:

In her secondary state Mary Reynolds did not recognise her parents, brothers, sisters, or friends; and "she was very slow to learn, and indeed never did learn, or, at least, never would acknowledge the ties of consanguinity, or scarcely those of friendship." These words might not apply with absolute exactness to Mary Barnes; yet I take it that her nicknaming of her father, mother, family, and of yourself and other doctors who visited her implies a loss of memory, not perhaps so complete, but similar in tendency.

Mary Reynolds and Mary Barnes both had to be re-taught:

reading and writing ; and both acquired, or rather re-acquired these arts within a far shorter period than is needed in the case of children learning them for the first time.

Mary Reynolds' was a case of dual personality only, and not of multiple personality, and she did not therefore display the multifarious changes that your patient did. Still, both finished up by remaining permanently not in their normal, but in an abnormal state ; for after alternating between her two states for a period of 15 or 16 years, Mary Reynolds at the age of 36 settled down for good, namely, for the last 25 years of her life, into her secondary condition. This secondary condition was undoubtedly superior to her original normal personality. This cannot, it is true, be said of Mary Barnes' present and apparently permanent state, for I understand that B6 is not superior to the original normal personality as it existed before her illness ; but at any rate B6 is vastly superior to several of the other personalities.

(2) With that of Miss Beauchamp :

You narrate one instance in your paper where one of the abnormal personalities recalled an incident which had happened when Mary Barnes was only two years and a half old ; and in conversation you told me that you thought that there was some reason for supposing that her memory in one of her stages went back even earlier than this. I know that you do not attach much weight to this point, because you recognise the enormous difficulties of excluding the possibility of such memories of babyhood being really due to imagination, or to the girl having heard her elders recount incidents belonging to the time when she was a tiny child. Nevertheless, though of course the same objections apply, it strikes me as rather remarkable that Dr. Morton Prince believed that the personality whom he christened Sally remembered events of her babyhood, such, for instance, as learning to walk ; and at any rate she *professed* to remember all this long way back. That you and Dr. Morton Prince, both in entire ignorance of each other's case, should have been led to the same surmise about two different subjects, lends some mutual confirmation to the observations of both. There is, however, one point of difference between these two cases. The otherwise omniscient, or nearly omniscient, Sally did not know French or other foreign



languages with which the normal Miss Beauchamp was familiar; whereas while the normal Mary Barnes knew no French, and would not learn it, and could not draw, B6 and B9 knew some French, and B10 could draw.

(3) With that of Lurancy Vennum:

The phenomena were entirely of a spiritualistic type, the various personalities, in this case styled "controls," purporting to be the spirits of deceased persons. With the exception of one "control," and that the most persistent, there does not appear to be any evidence to show that these controls were anything more than secondary personalities. Yet in spite of the wide divergences between the symptoms recorded of Lurancy Vennum and those of your patient, I note one little point in common. When supposed to be controlled by the spirit of a woman named Katrina Hogan, Lurancy Vennum called her father "Old Black Dick," and her mother "Old Granny": much as Mary Barnes nicknamed her parents and other members of her family.

(4) With that of Miss Anna Winsor ("Old Stump"):

"Old Stump" (which was the name given by Miss Winsor to what was really her right arm, though she refused to recognise it as such) executed a series of drawings; whereas Anna Winsor in her normal state never learnt to draw, nor cared to try to draw. A parallel is to be found in the performances of B10.

"Old Stump" wrote poetry, and it is stated that the handwriting of the different pieces of poetry "differs greatly": another point of contact, and that in a most interesting particular, with one of the phenomena which you were fortunate enough to witness in the case of Mary Barnes.

Again, it is recorded of Miss Winsor: "She became blind, 4th of January;" [1861: nearly six months, that is, after the first manifestation of her peculiar symptoms] "is still blind," ["still" meaning two months later] "sees as well with eyes closed as open; keeps them closed much of the time. Reads and draws with them closed. Draws in the dark as well as in the light; is clairvoyant."

Leaving aside the clairvoyance, which Dr. Isa Barrows, Miss Winsor's medical attendant, so airily disposes of in a couple of words, there are two points of resemblance to your case: namely, the psychical blindness, and the drawing in the

dark or with the eyes closed. I do not know whether Mary Barnes actually executed any of her drawings in the dark; but she was able to copy written words and to copy fashion-plates under conditions which seem to have excluded dependence upon her sense of sight.

I remark, however, one point of difference in connection with the blindness, or rather with the recovery of the sight. Thus when Anna Winsor recovered her sight after eighteen months of "erratic vision," she found the light painful to her eyes, and in consequence the room in which she lived had to be darkened. When Mary Barnes recovered her sight, she seems to have experienced no painful sensations.

One point which you have recorded of "Nick" interested me greatly, because a parallel to it can be found in a most unexpected quarter.

Professor William James quotes in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* the personal narratives of a certain number of people who have undergone "religious conversion"; and one of the leading characteristics of the converted state, of the "new man," as exemplified in these narratives, is not only a magnified appreciation of nature, but a perfect tranquillity in the presence of nature in her savage moods.

One convert writes:—"When a boy, I was standing under a tree which was struck by lightning, and received a shock, from the effects of which I never knew exemption until I had dissolved partnership with worry. Since then lightning and thunder have been encountered under conditions which would formerly have caused great depression and discomfort, without [my] experiencing a trace of either."

And another says:—"And scarce anything, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunderstorm arising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoices me."

This latter is the declaration of Jonathan Edwards: and, the phraseology apart, might have been made by "Nick"; except that, for all we know, "Nick" was unaware of Mary Barnes' fear of thunderstorms and Mary Barnes of "Nick's" enjoyment of them.

We may perhaps compare with this relief from physical fear what is described of Mary Reynolds in her secondary state:—"She knew no fear, and as bears and panthers were numerous in the woods . . . her friends told her of the danger to which she exposed herself; but it produced no other effect than to draw forth a contemptuous laugh, as she said, 'I know you only want to frighten me and keep me at home, but you miss it, for I often see your bears, and I am perfectly convinced that they are nothing more than black hogs.'" One day she encountered a "black hog" when riding; the horse was frightened and refused to move; so Mary Reynolds dismounted, and stick in hand went close up to the bear, which "walked away, slowly and sullenly."

There may be, and indeed is, an important difference here between the fearless behaviour of Mary Reynolds in the presence of a bear and that of "Nick" during a thunderstorm; for "Nick" did not mistake the thunderstorm for anything less terrifying, while Mary Reynolds seems to have owed her absence of fear to an opportune and protective illusion. And as regards the feeling of security typical of the religious convert and the fearlessness of "Nick" and Mary Reynolds, the latter should perhaps be attributed to what Myers, commenting on the case of Mary Reynolds, calls "the childish insouciance of the secondary state," that is to a *lower* stage of *intellectual* development; while the former one is rather inclined to ascribe not to an intellectual inability to recognise the risk of danger, but to a *higher*, or at any rate altered, condition of the *moral* character, in which the individual finds himself in perfect tune with all the manifestations of nature, and welcomes and enjoys them as the workings of a loving God.

Still the interesting fact remains that, in these various cases of altered personality of widely divergent origin, this sense of fearlessness crops up often enough to warrant one in regarding it almost as a typical symptom.

While on this topic I might add that the first oncoming of Miss Beauchamp's changes of personality dated from a thunderstorm. An incident of a painful character was in progress, and this alone may have been sufficient to have upset her equilibrium; but the thunderstorm may also have played a

part. "The surroundings, too," writes Dr. Morton Prince, "were dramatic. It was night, and pitch dark, but a storm was coming up, and great peals of thunder and flashes of lightning heightened the emotional effect. . . . From that time she was changed."

I cannot find that Miss Beauchamp either before or after this time is said to have shown fear of thunderstorms, though, as she seems to have been of a timid disposition, it would not be surprising if she had. Nor can I find it noted that in any of her abnormal states she showed delight in them; though it would be quite consistent with the character of that saucy young secondary personality Sally Beauchamp to snap her fingers in the face of even Nature with a capital N. But I am getting too fanciful, and will trouble you with only one more observation.

I cannot help regretting that you have not in your paper laid greater stress on one incident that you dismiss in a sentence or two. You record how on one occasion, when your patient was in a particular phase in which she did not count beyond two, you asked her "very quickly" (the "very quickly" is the pith of the statement) how many fingers there were on her hand, and although she was supposed at this time not to count above two, she replied "five." It is true that she at once corrected herself and started counting again on her "one, two" system; but the correction came too late, and I would say that the romancing secondary personality had given itself away. In other words, you surprised her momentarily into her normal state. I wish that you had made other attempts to catch her; not, of course, by direct questions, but by employing artifice. I do not mean that I think that Mary Barnes was shamming; I think nothing so foolish. But it does look as if the normal personality is not really obliterated or entirely unconscious during such times as the abnormal personalities are active, but as if it is really there all the time, only sent to Coventry by the usurping secondary personality. If this really was the case, then the mental phenomena exhibited by your patient would accord with what I cannot help believing is really true of all hypnotised subjects: namely, that whatever the subjects themselves may assert, or whatever conclusions their observers may draw from their behaviour, the normal person-

ality, although in abeyance and although difficult to get at, is never really extinct. I should be inclined to say that by your sudden question you provoked an automatism of the normal consciousness.

J. G. PIDDINGTON.

COMMENTS BY DR. C. LLOYD TUCKEY.

I saw "Mary Barnes" some years ago with Dr. Wilson. She then called herself "Poor Thing," and had the manners and speech of a child of six or seven, though she was twice that age. I tried to hypnotise her, but failed, and other operators had also found her insusceptible. This was unfortunate, for hypnotism would probably have supplied a bridge of memory, and enabled us to establish a connection between the various personalities, as in the case of Ansel Bourne recorded by Prof. William James and Dr. R. Hodgson,<sup>1</sup> and in a recent case of my own. The latter was that of a bank clerk, and was investigated by Dr. Leaf, Miss Goodrich Freer, and myself. The subject disappeared from the bank on a Friday about mid-day and "woke up" late on Saturday night in a strange hotel at Southampton. He could not give any account of how he had passed the 36 intervening hours until he was thrown into a deep hypnotic trance. He then answered questions, and gave a complete history of his proceedings. Subsequent investigation proved the truth of his story, and that his actions in the "second state" were quite purposeful. The man was neurotic and given to occasional alcoholic excess, and in two or three of the other cases I have seen there was a history of epilepsy or aggravated hysteria. The most recent case I have come across was that of an Oxford undergraduate, who after a period of overwork disappeared from his home without warning and telegraphed ten days after from Malta for money to bring him back. It appeared that he "woke up" on board a steamer at Tunis in the act of knocking a man down who had tried to steal his portmanteau. The excitement seems to

<sup>1</sup> In *Proceedings*, S.P.R., Vol. VII., p. 221.

have brought him round, perhaps by shifting the connection of the neurones. He knew nothing of what had happened during the ten days, but his actions had evidently been rational or he would have been arrested. We hoped to obtain a key by hypnosis, but unfortunately the young man, on the advice of an eminent brain specialist, refused to be operated on, so we may have lost an interesting story.

There is a good deal of literature on the subject since the publication of Professor Azam's exhaustive monograph<sup>1</sup> in 1887. The S.P.R. did much to elucidate this fascinating and puzzling problem at a time when its importance was not generally recognised. Members will recall papers by the late Dr. A. T. Myers, and a recent one by Dr. Morton Prince.<sup>2</sup> Now the subject is often referred to in the daily papers, and cases of lapsed memory and dual consciousness are discussed by the man in the street.

The physiological explanation put forward by Dr. Wilson is a most valuable contribution towards the scientific understanding of the subject. The case is one of the most striking hitherto recorded, and it is most fortunate that it has been under the notice of such a painstaking and accomplished investigator.

#### COMMENTS BY DR. ROBERT JONES.

Dr. Wilson seems to me to have made an able and careful summary of many observations in an almost unique case. It had been suggested that "Mary Barnes'" different states might be due to hypnotic conditions, but it is obvious that they are rather to be looked upon as cataleptic or in some way related to that post-epileptic trance condition described as post-epileptic automatism, and one which is familiar to those who have the care of the insane. The stages may also remind us of the imitative aptitudes of children, which cause them to acquire ideas and ways of acting current in the community to which they belong, and in this case there was no stage

<sup>1</sup> *Hypnotisme, Double Conscience et Altérations de la Personnalité*, Paris, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, S.P.R., Vol. XV., p. 466.

which was foreign to the natural experience of the ages through which Mary Barnes had passed. As to the reality or unreality of these personalities, when the attention is engrossed upon one line of thought, there is generally a forgetfulness of other states, arising from the fulness of concentration. As is known, in health the life-history of every individual consciousness embraces many diverse and often incongruous states and tendencies, and all self-consciousness implies a possibility of a division of the total self, so that there is, so to speak, one self and many selves. At any moment of time the attention may be fixed upon one or other of these "selves," and only in so far as they differ from each other and the *present* self do they seem separate states or stages, and we regard them accordingly as distinct selves; for instance, the self of dreams is regarded as quite distinct from the waking self, and the man sober can reflect upon the man drunk and draw many lessons and resolutions from the revived disgrace and the remembered reproach. After having been overcome by some sudden and exceptional condition in which he is impelled to act injuriously to the interests of another, he may refuse to recognise the lower self and explain it away under the excuse that he was not master of his actions. Also in states of mental conflict when moral principle struggles against temptation, two personalities may be assumed, the one the higher self, the other what appears to be a foreign and intrusive personality.

Cases of double personality are not to be confused with the ordinary delusions of insanity; for in the latter case there are not two separate threads of memory, but the memory is continuous in the intervals of the delusion. Thus I have at the present time in the London Asylum, Claybury, one patient who believes that he is taken out every night against his will, and also against his will is compelled to work in an adjoining brickfield. His tired sensations in the morning—possibly the effect of rheumatism—confirm his delusions, and no reasoning as to the absence of clay or the want of confirmation of his story by others who slept in the next bed are of any avail. Other characters are assumed by other persons: the prophet Daniel, Napoleon Bonaparte, the King, and Miss Hickman—all these figure as altered personalities. The present is with these persons so persistent and over-powering and engrossing

PLATES I.—IX.



1

1

.

47. THE DOCTOR

if you is coming to see me to  
at night i will ~~be~~ be  
good if you ~~to~~ not hit  
a ~~funny~~ funny one (via you

PLATE I.

PLATE II.

(1)

Now dear Dr Wilson

I am writing you a few lines to let you know Poor old NICK has woke up I will tell you all about it I woke up all

(2)

Dear Dr Wilson

I am writing you a letter to tell you how I am enjoying myself in Mo. It is such a glorious place.

(3)

Last night and I was so fedfully pleased and I did like the doctor Cross whom I went out this

PLATE III.

(1)

The dear Tomadod,  
Just a line to you to  
tell you how much I  
wish you were here. I  
hope there is some  
thing ~~in~~ ~~the~~  
your pocket to night

(2)

Dear Mr. Wilson,  
I am writing to  
say that I shall be  
able to keep appointment  
for next Monday, if you  
will write me full  
particulars.

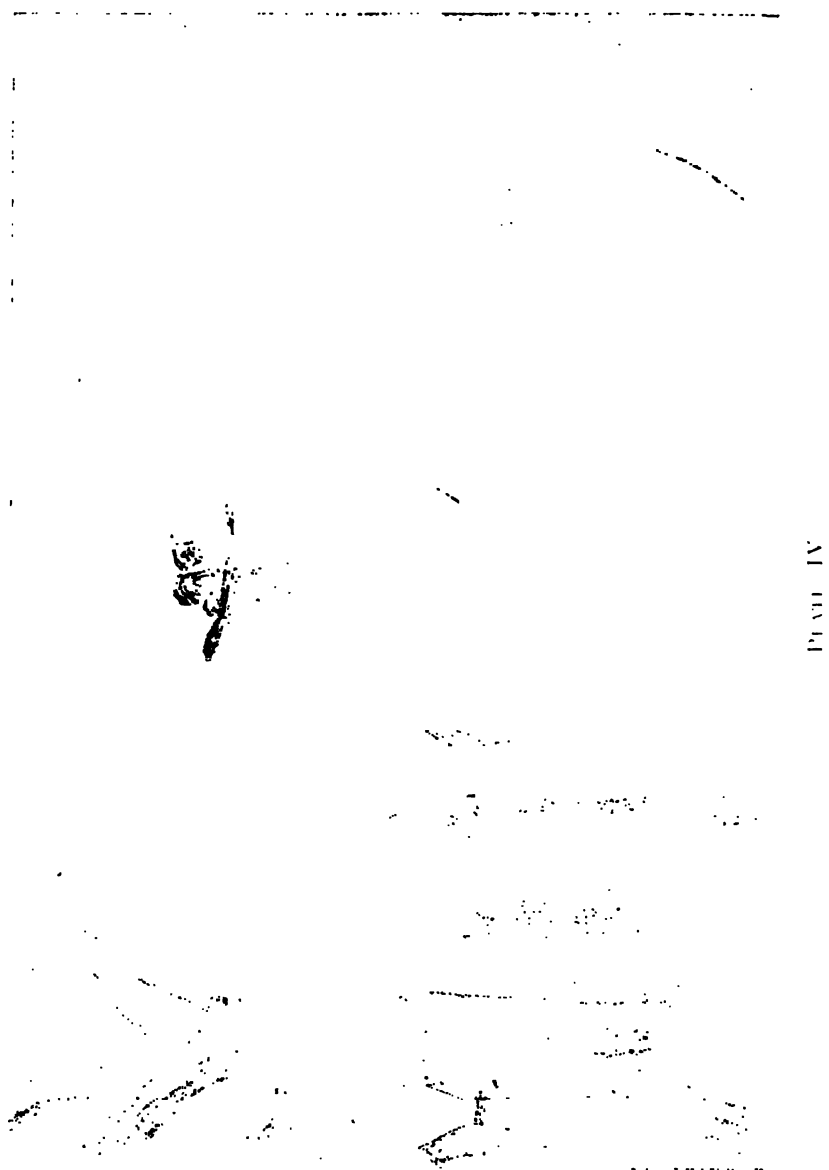


PLATE IV



PLATE V.



PLATE VI.

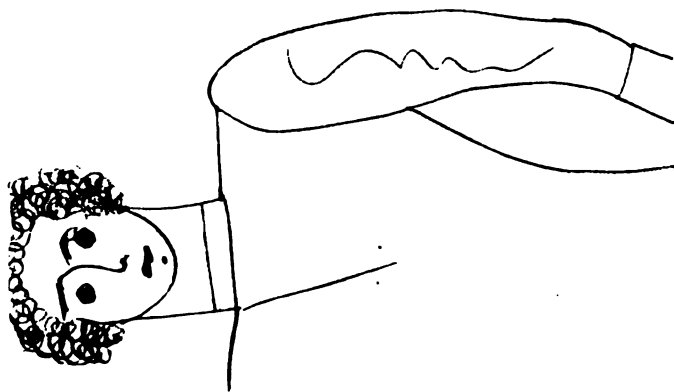


FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

PLATE VII.





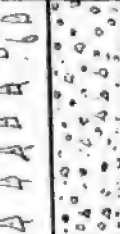
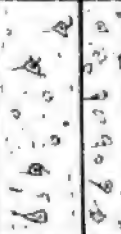
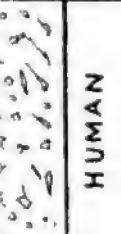
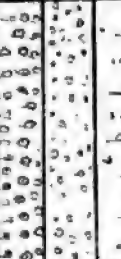

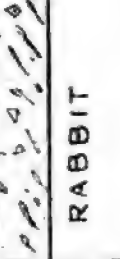


I		II		III		IV		V		RABBIT	
✓ 4 9 A		.27		.86		.20		.30		.05 mm	
											
I		II		III		IV		V		Total Depth	
.16		.14		.12		.18		.35		.05 mm	
											

PLATE VIII.

PLATE IX.

FIG. 1.

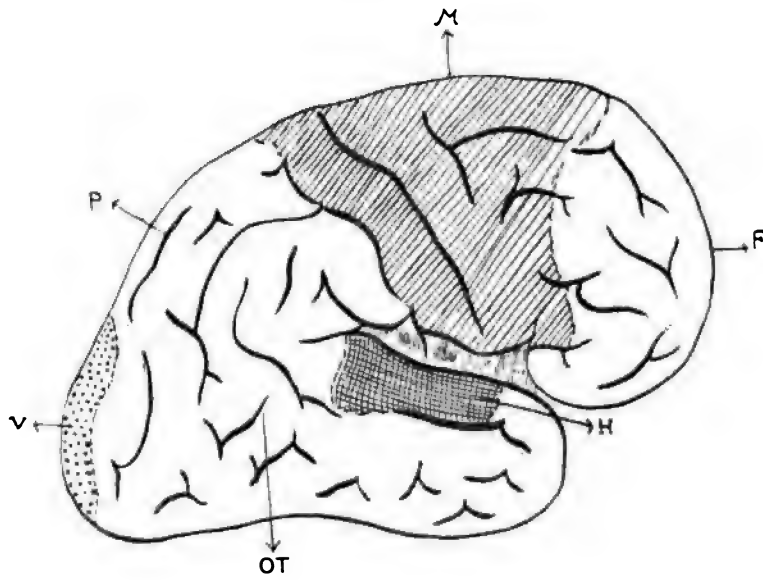
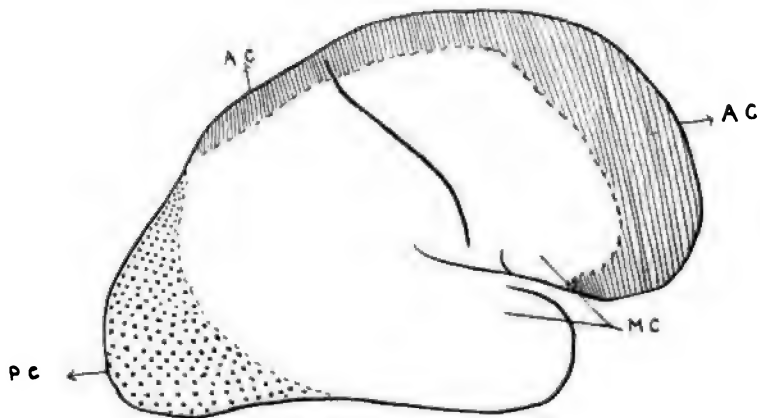


FIG. 2.





that the past is ignored; but this is mere temporary forgetfulness of the past, and does not involve the formation of a completely separate chain of memories referring to the delusional state alone, and carried on from one to the next appearance of the state.

The organic sensations, *i.e.* the emotional tone, probably has much to do with these cases of delusion.

Dr. Wilson's physiological explanation of the alternating personalities seems to be a theory well worth considering.

## II.

✓ THE ANSWERS TO THE AMERICAN BRANCH'S  
QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING HUMAN SENTIMENT  
AS TO A FUTURE LIFE.<sup>1</sup>

BY F. C. S. SCHILLER.

It is my purpose in this paper to discuss the results of the inquiry into the actual state of human sentiment, which Dr. Richard Hodgson and the American Branch of our Society undertook about three years ago, only in so far as these results have a special bearing on the methods of the S.P.R. Although the idea underlying this inquiry was novel, the material collected by it has proved to be of great psychological interest and immensely suggestive in a variety of ways; but I intend to discuss its psychological aspects in another, and I hope more systematic, form. Even from the point of view of this Report, however, I shall have to begin by explaining the aim of what must doubtless have appeared to many a particularly puzzling and unintelligible bit of psychical research. I feel indeed that those who have been good enough to help us by answering our questions and by procuring answers from others, must have done so largely from faith in a useful purpose they could not see. A demand for such faith is always more or less involved in the questionnaire method of investigation, because the point to be tested must always be so concealed as not to arouse partisan spirit for or against. It is better to run the risk of having the whole affair regarded as pointless and insignificant than that of collecting answers modified to suit, or to thwart, a detected purpose.

<sup>1</sup> The essential parts of this paper were read to a General Meeting of the Society on November 14th, 1902.

The time however has come to justify the modicum of faith accorded us by explaining the point of the inquiry, and I am confident that its importance will then be recognised.

# I.

I must admit then, in the first place, that it is a very belated inquiry. In strict logic it should have come twenty years ago, at the very outset of the Society's career. For regarded, not as a piece of general scientific work, *i.e.* as psychological investigation, but in its special relation to the S.P.R.'s work, it is essentially *an attempt to test the social atmosphere* in which the Society must live and operate. By *social atmosphere* I mean the attitude which people at large maintain towards any subject and those interested in it. We are all of us in all our pursuits influenced by such an atmosphere. Its presence is always more or less felt; it stifles or stimulates every form of intellectual life, although its effects differ according as it is denser or rarer, favourable or the reverse. Moreover some subjects are hardy enough to flourish in almost any climate. But I know only of one case in which the social atmosphere may be said not to act: we can *think* what we like, no matter what others may think about what we think, provided that we keep our thoughts *strictly to ourselves*, and do not act on them. As soon as we begin to *act on* our thoughts, society begins to guess at them; as soon as we begin to *express* them, we have to take into consideration what others will think of them. And thus the social atmosphere will check, or promote, or direct, our growth, and the place of Mrs. Grundy in scientific research is just as real and as worthy of study as in matters of morals and manners.

Now in Psychical Research we are as yet peculiarly sensitive to the condition of the social atmosphere. It is still a new subject, and a new subject always has a hard struggle to get acclimatised, and probably demands a certain amount of readjustment in the atmospheric conditions. There is however an obvious advantage in effecting this readjustment as gently as possible. We want to raise a wind without provoking a storm; to remove the stagnant air which broods oppressively over the subjects

society is content to leave untouched without invoking a cyclone. The very formation of a *Society* for Psychical Research is in a way a proof of this contention; for it involves an attempt to *make* a social atmosphere of a local kind which may be favourable to the proper study of subjects which could not be pursued by individuals in the open. But even then the prosperity of the Society will depend on the attitude of the larger society around it. If it is favourable to our work, it can assist us in myriad ways; it can supply us with money, information, recruits; in fact do everything for us except make the scientific discoveries themselves. If it is indifferent, it can indefinitely retard our progress. If it is actively against us, it can thwart us in an infinity of ways, persecute us until we desist, nay ultimately suppress us, and bury us and our discoveries in oblivion.

Now the remarkable men who founded the S.P.R. seem to me to have unconsciously made a very definite assumption with respect to the social atmosphere. They knew, of course, that they would have to deal *inter alia* with subjects reputed to be of an interesting, nay of an exciting, character, with evidence which seemed to deal with the *post mortem* fortunes of mankind. And it was natural enough to assume that their enterprise would be regarded with favour. Would not everybody welcome an honest, scientific and dispassionate investigation of the dark corners of human psychology, of an intelligent questioning of the gibbering ghosts that had flitted so enigmatically before the eyes of untold generations? Was not everybody really anxious for light upon the mystery of human fate, and really desirous of the assurance that death was not the inexorable end of all, if only that assurance could be made with scientific certainty? They were aware, of course, with what scorn materialists and agnostics, seated many of them in the high places of the intellectual world, looked down upon everything that savoured of superstition, and with what nervous disapproval they regarded any trafficking with the accursed thing. But they generously attributed these hostile prejudices to a quixotically lofty devotion to scientific truth, to a sternly stoic reluctance to yield to the allurements of desire, to a profoundly reasoned, and so far reasonable, conviction of the impossibility of discovering aught. They might well hope therefore that by producing an abundance

of good work, prosecuted in a scientific temper and verified by scientific methods, they would win pardon for their audacity from the scientific opposition, and perhaps even gratitude from a world eagerly desirous of relief from the agonies of doubt.

If however there was any serious error in this estimate of the condition of the social atmosphere, this whole policy was foredoomed to more or less disappointment. What if there were *no* widespread desire for a proof of a future life, or even for a scientific investigation of the apparent evidence? What if, consequently, this aspect of the Society's undertaking were socially unwelcome? What if its scientific critics were inspired, not by too jealous a regard for truth, but by personal dislike of the Society's aims and a lurking fear lest it should reveal truths which would involve a radical readjustment of inveterate opinions and ingrained habits? If such were predominant, or even common, sentiments among men, the appeal to scientific evidence would be bound to fail. For it would not meet with the receptiveness and open-mindedness towards new truth which all scientific discovery demands. No evidence can even begin to produce logical conviction until there is psychological willingness to receive it. This applies even to the abstract truths of *e.g.* arithmetic; it is impossible to prove even that  $2 + 2 = 4$  to one who is *unwilling to add*. Far more signally does this hold good of inductive researches like ours, where it would be childish to expect to prove anything beyond cavil by a single effort, where proof must be gradual and cumulative, and repose on the growing coherence of the new truth in a mind disposed to admit it. A mind unwilling to believe, or even undesirous to be instructed, our weightiest evidence must ever fail to impress. It will insist on taking that evidence in bits, and rejecting it item by item. The man therefore who announces his intention of waiting until one single absolutely conclusive bit of evidence turns up, is really a man *not* open to conviction; and if he is a logician, *he knows it*. For modern logic has made it plain that single facts never can be "proved," except by their coherence in a system. But as all the facts come singly, any one who dismisses them one by one is destroying the conditions under which the conviction of new truth could arise in his mind.



In other words, the discovery of truth presupposes, at least and in the first place, a *will to know*. It becomes therefore a vital question to what extent we may presuppose such a will to know. It seemed impossible to take this for granted. For the surface indications were ambiguous. On the one side indeed there was an almost overwhelming tradition that the problems of death and immortality were one of man's chief preoccupations in all ages, climes, races and religions. But on the other there were the facts that at all times and in all places there had been an enormous gap between professions and actions, that everywhere, in spite of the most divergent beliefs, men have acted much in the same way, and have shown much the same absorption in this world and its trivialities. And, what was still more puzzling, there was the extraordinary fact that never yet throughout the ages had any systematic attempt been made to investigate the problem. No doubt this neglect was coexistent with a widely prevalent belief that it was impossible to know; but then this same pretext had been made into an excuse for never attempting a real investigation. Hence the question arose whether no one had tried, because it was impossible, or whether it was thought impossible, because no one had ever tried?

Again, there were copious symptoms that the social atmosphere neither was, nor ever had been, wholly favourable to such attempts. A large number of people still seem to regard psychical research much as their ancestors a few generations back regarded witchcraft. It is not so very long ago that to be suspected of psychic powers was considered sufficient proof of an unholy alliance with the enemy of mankind, and that the burning of witches was deemed an entertaining addition to a popular holiday. The uniformity with which at all times, in all countries and under every variety of religious belief, the persons, whom for lack of a more definitely descriptive name we now call *psychics*, were subjected to atrocious persecution is one of the most remarkable features in social history. One can only suppose that in some obscure way they always excited dislike, that dislike led to persecution, and that the various theoretical reasons alleged in justification of their treatment were an afterthought, based on the principle of first giving a dog a bad name when you mean to hang him. Now human nature

changes very slowly, and it seemed unlikely that an instinctive antipathy of this sort would entirely die out in the course of a couple of centuries. If, therefore, it still persisted, under different forms and with different pretexts, now sheltering itself perhaps under the cloak of science just as formerly under the aegis of religion, it would still be potent to thwart, and if unrecognised, perhaps to wreck, the arduous enterprise to which we stood committed.

*A priori* speculation, then, left doubtful the real character of the social atmosphere. But being professionally a speculative philosopher myself, I was too well aware of the limits of its value to content myself with unverified speculation. So I ventured to suggest to the S.P.R. that it should try to find out what the facts really were. Fortunately Dr. Hodgson saw the vital importance of the question, and the American Branch undertook the enquiry.

My first point then is this. It is *all-important* for us to know the condition of the social atmosphere, in order to know what tactics we must adopt, and what we must do to alter it. If *e.g.* we find that there exists a strong prejudice *against* our investigations on sentimental and emotional grounds, we shall have to postpone the idea of adducing convincing evidence. It is a waste of time to bombard with facts minds firmly closed against their admission, and determined to quibble about their reception. We shall first have to strike deeper, at the roots of the primitive prejudices which obstruct our way. If, again, we can show that the social bias is not *for* us but rather against us, we can make an appeal to the instinct of fair play. If we can show that the survival of primitive superstitions is not the real basis for Psychical Research, because the people who cherish them have no desire to test them, if we can show that the traditional "desire for immortality" is a very doubtful ally, because it craves not knowledge but assurance, and resents the cautious advance of science, we can better claim the support of that scientific curiosity which has done so much for the advancement of knowledge, with a confidence we could never have demanded so long as it seemed as though all the forces of superstitious obscurantism were arrayed on our side. And so finally it may come to be admitted that in this field also the true obscurantists are those who declare *a priori*

that knowledge is impossible and all inquiry wicked and futile, as much when they repose on the *fauteuils* of the Royal Society, as when their indolence has taken shelter beneath the altars of some spiritual organisation.

But, it may be said, even granting this point, were not your questions absurd? Is it not grotesque to institute a *plebiscite* on questions of scientific fact? Of what value can the opinion of Tom, Dick, and Harry be on such a subject? And you did not even ask for their *opinions*, you asked for their *sentiments*. You asked them what they wished, as if you could supply them with spiritual refreshment according to taste, as if at the *table d'hôte* of life we could order what we wanted, and our wishes made any difference to the stereotyped *menu* of what we got. Could you really suppose that wishing could make us immortal, or that even the universality of a wish would constitute a real argument for immortality? Has not common-sense long ago disposed of such vagaries of human conceit by the proverbial: "If wishes were horses then beggars would ride"?

## II.

I hope that I shall not seem to have understated this indictment, and that I shall be permitted to explain how it brings me to my second point. It must be confessed in the first place that a great assumption underlay the form of our questions. We assumed that men's sentiments were usually more potent in swaying their action, more truly significant, than their opinions. By that assumption hangs a whole philosophy, which it is not the place here to justify. But whether or not the *voluntarist* view of human nature is truer and deeper than the *intellectualist*, I think sufficient independent reasons may be given for asking for sentiments rather than opinions. We realised, in the first place, that whatever we *asked for*, we should inevitably *get* plenty of opinions as well. It is so much easier to give opinions, which can be picked up anywhere, than to analyse oneself and realise one's inner sentiments. And secondly, opinions are so much cheaper and better known and less interesting. Had we asked for opinions, we should have got *only* the stereotyped formulas, taken

from books, sermons, and newspapers, which shed so little light on the motives that really actuate men. Thirdly, most people's *opinions* are worthless on most subjects, and on this particular subject it seemed that the people who had done anything to entitle their opinions to scientific respect might be counted on the fingers of one hand. Again, if, as we assumed, it was typical of human nature for opinions to be adopted under the propulsion of sentiment, it was clear that in asking for the sentiment we were getting at the real psychic force. And lastly, even in the cases where people's opinions really produced their sentiments, it seemed that they affected their actions through the latter, so that the only case that might conceivably elude our inquiry was that of people who feel one way and think another. But this state of things is usually revealed in the answers to Questions IIc. and III., and appears to be rare.

These, then, were the reasons for preferring to ask for sentiments rather than opinions. As for the bearing of our wishes on our future, I should have thought that what is called "the argument from universal consent" was sufficiently well known to appear to give point to an inquiry into the actual universality of that consensus. But this was neither our whole, nor our real point. Our real point was apparently too subtle to be perceived. It can, however, be made plain. Let us examine "*if wishes were horses then beggars would ride*" a little closer; for like all proverbs it probably requires more scrutiny than it will bear. In this case it should strike us at once that even though beggars do not yet prance about on horses, working men very commonly ride bicycles. And the bicycle seems to be a means of locomotion vastly superior to the antiquated quadruped which was the summit of man's ambition in this respect when some forgotten sage devised the proverb, and before a more progressive age had elaborated the railway, the steamship, and the motor-car. I observe similarly that *flying*, which was long a proverbial impossibility, has now become a question of persevering experiment, and bids fair to become a commercial success in our life-time. And when I am asked how these observations should be interpreted, I am forced to answer as follows. The world is so con-

structed that though it yields nothing to idle wishing, it will yield even what seemed most hopelessly impossible to strenuous and intelligent efforts to realise the objects of our desire. All our inventions, therefore, the whole fabric of applied knowledge which renders civilised man master of the earth, are the embodied realisations of human desires, wrought out by the unremitting efforts of generations. Why then should we not apply this principle to the matter in hand?

May we not infer that this problem of a future life will prove no exception to the rule of the efficacy of *the right sort of wishing*, that we can dissipate the clouds that seem so impenetrably to shroud the facts, *if only we desire to find out*, and will set to work with the same patient and business-like persistence we have shown everywhere else? But—and this is our primary question—*do we desire to find out?* Is our professed desire genuine? Is it extensive and intense enough?

Hence my second point: even though it were quite true that our desires do not affect the facts, and if I were discussing the subject exhaustively<sup>1</sup> I should have some

<sup>1</sup>When we regard the matter with any subtlety it is by no means self-evident that our desires make no difference. On the contrary, it will seem probable that our desires may make a great difference, alike whether we argue from (1) the analogy of the present life, or (2) the assumption of a cosmic principle, more or less sympathising with us and our feelings. Under (1) consider e.g. the fact that we can extinguish our life here, if we will. Might there not be analogous possibilities in other worlds? If so, *repeated* suicide might achieve the extinction desired. Again, we find our conditions here largely plastic; we can largely mould ourselves as we will. We can will to remember and to forget, to continue or to disavow our past, to reknit or to sever our social ties. If then in our life here every mental activity is intimately bound up with the character of our volition, is it not psychologically plausible to suppose that this will continue to be the case, and that the question of the continuance or evanescence of the mental life we have known may depend, wholly or in part, on our own action? If it is true that every function in life waxes and wanes according as it is exercised, why should not this law hold of life itself as a whole? In short, so soon as we abstain from rashly committing ourselves to the antiquated metaphysic which rendered the soul's existence dependent on that of an immutable "substance," which was supposed to underlie its manifestations, and conceive it as consisting essentially in the flow of its consciousness, it becomes almost undeniable that our consciousness (*and therefore our existence*) must be affected, and may be controlled, by our own actions to an indefinite extent. Seeing that the soul's flow to some extent directs itself, may it not choose to flow either into arid regions in which the stream

questions to raise on this subject, they are yet germane to the facts. For it is certain that our desires vitally affect *our knowledge of the facts*. With a desire not to know, the discovery and communication of knowledge are absolutely impossible; with no desire, there is no probability of knowledge; with desire, there is no impossibility of knowledge, or none, at least, that can be entertained *before inquiry*.

### III.

Having shown that the possibility of knowledge is conditioned by the desire for it, and that the desire is its presupposition and a first step to knowledge, we may now proceed to the inductive investigation of the desire and the way in which the questions were intended to elicit its character.

Question I.<sup>1</sup> inquires broadly whether a desire for a future life in general is felt.

Question II. gives an opportunity of stating more precisely the conditions under which the desire flourishes.

of consciousness loses itself and is dried up, or into well-watered districts in which it is swollen to many times its former volume by the accretion of spiritual tributaries. These possibilities would become still stronger if we entertained the thought of a deeper soul-current of which our phenomenal consciousness formed, as it were, a surface-eddy. In that case the mundane consciousness might or might not penetrate and perpetuate itself into a future life, more or less recognisably, according to its action in cultivating its memories, affections, spiritual value and so forth.

(2) Again, assuming the existence of a Deity capable of sympathetic personal relations with us, it would seem to follow at once that our relations must be affected by our wishes, prayers, and aspirations. According as we behave we shall be treated. And if we prefer, or fit ourselves for, annihilation, there is nothing absurd in the supposition that means may exist for giving us our deserts. Even in theology the thought has not infrequently been expressed that we are not naturally or intrinsically immortal, but become so through accepting salvation by Christ. It is evident both that this doctrine is morally superior to that of the eternal damnation of the reprobate, and also that it renders a future life so dependent on our own action, that no one could have it inflicted on him against his wish. Of course all these speculations must not be taken for more than they are worth, but they suffice to show that we are not entitled to take it for granted *a priori* that our wishes and our actions have nothing to do with the "facts" which affect us.

<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire is reprinted in full in the Appendix, see p. 450.

Question II. (a) "*Do you desire a future life whatever the conditions might be?*" is intended for a desire strong enough to demand a future life under any conditions. The existence of this desire has been treated as an absurdity, or at least as a logical anomaly. How can any one really prefer hell to annihilation? Indeed a distinguished philosopher argued that all the answers to the *Questionnaire* would be the same, because all rational beings would prefer heaven to annihilation, and annihilation to hell. Nevertheless our philosopher was wrong. He had not made sufficient allowance for the ability of human psychology to overcome difficulties which, as stated abstractly, seem to logic sheer absurdities. And so it turns out that not only is a real desire for the heaven of what used to be thought orthodoxy decidedly rare, but that a good many actually have so strong an objection to it that they assert that they would prefer annihilation. Moreover 22 per cent.—739 out of 3321—of the answers agree with Huxley and Milton's Satan in desiring a future life at all costs. Nor is there anything in this preference which should be really unintelligible to a sympathetic psychologist. When taken in its context it usually appears to be due (1) to a strong feeling of repugnance to annihilation; or (2) to an instinctive love of life so intense as to carry with it an emotional assurance that its possessor at least *must* survive death; or (3) to a conviction often expressed by spiritists, that they *know* the conditions of the future life sufficiently to take all risks; (4) to a general confidence in one's ability to render the conditions tolerable (which appears to have been the source of Huxley's preference); (5) to the confidence sometimes expressed by liberal Christians that the conditions may be left to a benevolent God who "will not toss to hell the luckless pots he marred in making"; and lastly (6), in a few cases to the overwhelming impression made by a recent bereavement. It appears, therefore, that all these answers are interesting and intelligible, and that this question was not asked in vain.

Question II. (b) "*What would have to be the character of a future life to make the prospect seem tolerable? Would you, e.g., be content with a life more or less like your present life?*" was so phrased in order to discover what are the least favourable conditions which would appear tolerable. It contains an

invitation to compare the future life desired with the actuality experienced. Do people want something like it or something different? Do they insist on something better, or would they prefer a future life of the same sort to extinction?

The answers are to some extent marred by a tendency to state rather the maximum which is desired than the minimum which would be accepted. Still it is clear that the answers to this question throw some light on the state of feeling with regard to the value of this life. Those who answer *yes*, and they seem to be a large majority, take an optimistic view of its value; while those who say *no* may do so either because they have very exalted notions of what the future life should be, or a very low opinion of what the present life is. Their other answers usually enable one to decide this point.

Question II. (c) "*Can you say what elements (if any) are felt by you to call for the perpetuity of life*" was added at the suggestion of the great psychologist, William James. It aims at discovering what reasons people give to themselves for desiring a future life. But, unfortunately, it has not worked very well, partly because it is too difficult to be readily answered by people who have given very little thought to the matter, partly because so many put down not so much what they feel, but what they think they *ought* to feel. This latter is of course a natural tendency of the human mind against which all such inquiries have to struggle throughout: it ordinarily requires considerable education and some practice in introspection to distinguish between the two even in one's own mind. And in this case the temptation to put down what tended to edification was increased by an ambiguity in the question, which might be understood to ask not for the elements in life which made the answerer desire perpetuity, but those which *in his opinion* rendered it objectively *desirable* (a very different thing).

The answers therefore were very various, the incompleteness of earthly life and the need of justice and reunion being perhaps the most prominent grounds assigned by those who answered affirmatively. The chief reasons assigned in the negative answers (1) were the misery of this world, (2) the inconceivableness of another. I have not had time to work



out the exact figures of the answers to this question, but have been somewhat impressed with the comparative rarity of the demand for selfish pleasure or even happiness: unless those who answered were an unusually high-minded set of people, it would seem that moralists must have libelled human nature somewhat grossly in assuming the practical universality of hedonistic motives.

Question III. "*Can you state why you feel in this way as regards Questions I. and II.?*" The answers to this question run very much into those to Question II. (c), and are not worth discussing apart. The question itself was inserted simply and solely to provide for those who thought that their sentiments were determined by their religious or scientific convictions, in order that they might state that in their case sentiment and belief were not discordant. In spite, however, of the emphasis on this point in the preamble, a good many persons complained that they could not properly answer the questions because their sentiments *did* agree with their convictions, and some even made it into their excuse for declining to answer altogether. One can only suppose that they either did not read the preamble at all, or did not read it to the end, for of course the section in the preamble asking for sentiments as far as possible separated from convictions was only intended (1) to enable people to avoid expressing their convictions by asking only for the (less compromising) sentiments, (2) to draw their attention to the fact that their sentiment might not at all accord with their beliefs. Of course this confession was frequently made in the answers, but on the whole the question was a failure. A great many answered *no*, and the answers were mostly much the same as those to II. (c). Religion was alleged as the ground of sentiment more rarely than might have been expected, perhaps in consequence of misunderstanding, but its influence upon sentiment appeared to be much greater than that of science.

Question IV. "*Do you now feel the question of a future life to be of urgent importance to your mental comfort?*" brings us to the cardinal point of the *questionnaire*. The answers to the first question supplied an inadequate test of the desire for a future life, in that everybody who had a preference, however faint and occasional, for continuance would answer it affirma-

tively, especially as the second question enabled him to name his own conditions. Practically all except those who did not want a future life at any price could answer the first two questions by a more or less qualified affirmative. Hence many who gravely doubted, or quite disbelieved, the possibility of a future life answered these questions in the affirmative. But such persons would not usually admit that the question possessed urgency for their mental comfort. Accordingly we get here a considerable predominance of *noes* (1314 *yes* out of 3321), and these are often of a very decided character, '*not at all*,' '*not in the least*,' '*never think about it*,' being common phrases.

A certain difficulty was caused by those who had never entertained a doubt, or had trained themselves to regard a future life as certain, and then dismissed the matter from their minds. On the whole these had to be counted as *yesses*, especially when it was expressly stated that though a future life might not be often thought of, yet to lose this assurance would amount to a spiritual catastrophe. On the other hand, some of those who attribute to themselves a faith so firm that they '*never think about it*,' seem to be making their '*faith*' an excuse for a practical neglect of such spiritual matters.

On the whole the answers to this question seem distinctly unfavourable to the doctrine that the interest actually taken in the matter of a future life is commensurate with its spiritual importance, or that the question looms as large on our mental horizon as tradition had assumed. Nor is this psychologically at all surprising. We could not do our work efficiently here if our concern about the future were to become seriously distracting. But there are many ways (as we saw) of preventing such concern from reaching a dangerous intensity. Indeed it is rather the frequency of utter absorption in worldly affairs that gives one a sort of æsthetic shock.

Question V., inquiring into the changes in people's feelings, was something of a disappointment to me personally. Before seeing the results, I had argued in the *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1901 (p. 439),<sup>1</sup> that the reason why the feeling of the literature-producing minority as to the importance of the future life had imposed itself on the masses was partly that the

<sup>1</sup> In an essay reprinted in *Humanism*, p. 242.

latter were too indifferent to contradict them, partly that at one time or other nearly every one did get stirred up about it, and that the memory of this phase of opinion disposed to ready acquiescence in the assertion of the immense importance of the question. But it appears that a large proportion (probably more than half) deny that their feelings have changed in any important degree. It would seem, therefore, that even in questioning its universality I still exaggerated the extent of the real interest in the question when I supposed that nearly everybody must have felt at least a temporary concern about it. I did not allow sufficiently for the prevalence of sheer thoughtlessness and inertia, nor for the number of those who have never cared to go into the grounds of their belief.

It is possible, however, in this case to go behind the actual returns, and to doubt whether on this point they fairly represent the actual facts. There is a natural tendency to represent oneself in memory as more consistent than contemporary documents would quite warrant, and one cannot but suspect that phrases like '*not materially*,' '*only development*,' '*not change but growth*,' may really cover very substantial alterations of belief and sentiment. Again, answers like, '*not that I can remember*,' '*not as far as I know*,' sound suspicious, and it seems not improbable that in the course of years many considerable changes may have been forgotten.

Still, I must admit that the returns show comparatively little evidence of great spiritual revolutions, and still less of any considerable or lasting mental anguish connected with them. The apparent absence of any widespread spiritual distress is certainly very striking and surprising, though here again this might perhaps have been inferred from the surface indications of general placidity and contentment. It would seem that spiritual crises and prolonged religious excitements are the prerogative of exceptional temperaments; ordinary persons seem to adjust themselves easily and rapidly to their definitive attitude.<sup>1</sup>

Question VI., again, is very important, as inquiring directly the existence of a will to know. Indeed it is the comparison of the answer to this question with that to Question IV.

<sup>1</sup> This fact, if such it be, should evidently be borne in mind in reading studies of the extremer forms of spiritual temperament, e.g. James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

which will usually determine the character of the answer. The alternatives, "*would you prefer to know for certain or to leave it a matter of faith?*" are not of course exhaustive; and they may even be taken in a sense in which they are not exclusive. Indeed, like all the words of ordinary language, the terms 'knowledge' and 'faith' are very ambiguous. This was not infrequently pointed out in replies which held that 'faith' was practically 'knowledge,' or included 'knowledge,' or was higher than 'knowledge,' and it was of course perfectly well known to us. But we wanted to suggest to them a choice between the two alternatives which we believed would at first sight most readily present themselves.

At first sight the results may seem excellent from an S.P.R. point of view, and be supposed to show the existence of a decided preference for knowledge. For out of a total of about 3218 replies a clear majority of 1706 seem to vote for 'knowledge,' as against 'faith,' 749; 'ignorance,' etc., 415; and 'indifference,' 107. Of course, however, the question remains how far these figures can be accepted as representative. But apart from this it is evident that large deductions have, unfortunately, to be made from the figures as they stand. It is morally certain, *e.g.* that a large number of indifferents have put themselves down as desiring to know and as possessing faith, and that to obtain a trustworthy indication of the desire to know, we must try to weed them out, in order to find out how many really desire to know.

Of those who voted for 'knowledge' we strike out therefore (1) those who showed a negative or indifferent attitude towards the first question and who, therefore, would like to know only that there was *no* future life, and sometimes state this expressly (225). We may dismiss (2) those who only want to know on general grounds or use phrases indicating that their preference for knowledge is very slight or doubtful (123). We may eliminate (3) those who would like to know but think knowledge impossible, and seem too contented with this state of things to be credited with any but a conditional desire to know (64). Deducting these, our majority disappears, and our numbers are reduced to 1294. (4) We can hardly rely without reservation on the desire to know of those who stipulate that they want assurance only of the *fact* of a future

life, or of its *pleasantness*, even though, if they really tried to know, they might discover that to know the 'fact' they needed also to establish a great many of the details (102). (5) And lastly, those (511) who would prefer knowledge after answering Question IV. in the negative, can hardly in the vast majority of cases be supposed to have a very keen desire for scientific certainty on the subject. Answers of this type coming from members of the S.P.R., or showing other internal evidence of a genuine desire to know, have, however, been retained in the list of those who desire to know. Nor (6) can we appeal to those (178) who are already certain that there is a future life to support a scientific investigation of its existence. (7) On the other hand, we may add to the effective desire to know the votes of the very few who, though personally satisfied with faith, desire scientific proof for the sake of their weaker brethren.

Making these alterations and throwing out some answers (42), in which insufficient details are given to determine the nature of the desire to know, we find that 681 out of 3218, *i.e.* rather over 21 per cent., may be credited with a real desire for scientific knowledge of the possibility of a future life.<sup>1</sup> That still seems fairly satisfactory, but I fear that even so these figures enormously exaggerate the actual importance of this desire. For they doubtless include the votes of many whose desire to know, though real enough, is not very strong, and would not impel them to inconvenience themselves in order to satisfy it. And moreover, I shall have to admit that there is a probability that the *questionnaire* has unduly selected those who desire to know, so that about one out of five indicates the *maximum*, but not the probable, strength of the desire.

#### IV.

Provisionally, however, and until better ones are attainable, let us accept these figures, and proceed to ask, *what do they prove?* How far can they be trusted to give a true picture of the state of human sentiment generally?

The question needs careful consideration, because it is mainly at this point that the value of our results will be impugned,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for the detailed table of figures.

especially by those who do not like the conclusions to which they point.

Let us admit in the first place that the results are incomplete. At best they represent the sentiment only of an infinitesimal fraction even of English-speaking humanity. But I would beg to point out that such incompleteness is inevitable, and inseparable not merely from all such statistical, but also from all inductive inquiry. All the great inductive generalisations rest in the first instance on samples selected from a vastly more extensive material. The geographer maps out the ocean floor by taking soundings every ten miles, or infers its character from little samples of the abysmal mud. The doctor describes the symptoms of a disease from a few cases. The chemist describes the properties of the rarer and more difficult chemicals on the basis of a few experiments, repeated perhaps at intervals of a generation. The psychologist in his generalisations about human nature has hitherto rested on little but introspection of himself, and even in the new experimental school he is making inductions from a few dozen or hundred pupils whom he can test in his laboratories. And so forth throughout the sciences.

The value of such reasonings depends entirely on the question whether we have secured *fair samples* of a material which it is impossible to examine exhaustively. And thus the only really relevant question as to our results is: *Can they be regarded as "fair samples" of human desire?*

(I.) I hope it will be admitted that the questions themselves were fair, and gave no indication of any bias or tendency. Not of course that they escaped criticism on this account. But the criticisms about cancel each other. Some thought that the answer *yes* was desired to the first question, others the answer *no*, some that we were too scientific, others that we were not scientific enough. Here *e.g.* are the comments of a widow lady of mature experience: "I can never sympathise with any Psychical Research Society while it is conducted on the present highly emotional lines that tend to hysterical illusions." I hope that this judgment will make a proper impression on our sceptics, and induce them to abstain from pampering such illusions in future!

The religious bearing of the questions has been variously

construed in much the same way. To scientific materialists the mere fact that they emanated from Psychical Research circles has seemed sufficient to condemn them; over-anxious believers have expressed their fears that their effect must be anti-religious, that only infidels, agnostics, and heretics would answer them, that no orthodox Christian would stand such searching interrogation, and that reflection was sure to be detrimental to faith. As I shall presently show how groundless these apprehensions were, I shall now merely point out that, whatever might be read into them, the questions themselves were, and were intended to be, wholly impartial and devoid of tendency either for or against any religious view. And on the whole they were so understood and answered freely by all sorts of men, including a considerable number of clergymen of all denominations, without leading to any difficulties. Indeed, although we did not ask for it, we obtained far more information as to our correspondents' religious opinions than we had expected.

(II.) As to the distribution of circulars. Questionnaires were sent to the members of the *American Branch of the S.P.R.*, of the *American Psychological Association*, and of the *Mind Association*. Appeals were also inserted in the *S.P.R.'s Journal*, the *International Journal of Ethics and Mind*. In America a number of copies were sent also to the daily press. In the September 1901 number of the *Fortnightly Review* I sought to raise the question in an article entitled, "*Do men desire immortality?*"<sup>1</sup> This brought me in a large amount of correspondence, and a certain amount of notice in the press. Mr. B. J. Padshah reprinted the Questionnaire in Bombay, and circulated it in India, especially among the Parsis; Mr. Stanton Coit reprinted it in *Ethics*, and circulated it among the members of Ethical Societies. We are greatly indebted to both of these gentlemen for valuable and interesting batches of answers, whose type differed materially from the rest, and served the purpose of 'control' experiments. The editor of the *Jewish Quarterly* wrote an interesting discussion in his October 1901 number and himself answered the questions, and there were more or less complete translations, with more or less comment, in a considerable number of foreign papers (especially

<sup>1</sup> Since then included in my *Humanism* (1903).

spiritistic) in most civilised countries, except Germany. On the whole, however, it cannot be said that we succeeded in arousing any considerable interest in the press, and it is quite possible that the able editors who deemed the subject unworthy even of a 'silly season' discussion, correctly gauged the extent of public interest in the matter. Meanwhile, copies of the Questionnaire were freely issued to any one who desired to answer, and was willing to collect answers from others, and this method on the whole proved the most satisfactory. Altogether about 10,000 copies were circulated. It will be seen, however, that mainly owing to the slenderness of our resources, the distribution must be pronounced to have been quite random and unsystematic.

Now, would this distribution be likely to induce a selection and bias in the answers obtained? I am afraid this question must be answered in the affirmative. (1) The agency of the S.P.R. was undoubtedly prejudicial in scientific circles, in which both bias and occupation would most dispose towards negative answers, and *de facto* only a comparatively small number of answers were returned thence. (2) A disproportionate number of answers came from the Society's members, *e.g.* from 248, *i.e.* about half, of the American Branch. And in them the desire to know was very markedly greater than in the average answers, and rose to over 50 per cent.<sup>1</sup> (3) Probably the spiritists were over-represented in the answers, not so much because they were more disposed to answer, as because so many spiritist papers reprinted the questionnaire. And they were nearly always either 'certain' or desirous of knowing.

It is clear, however, that the whole of this preferential collection or bias would tend to *increase* the number of *yeses* to Q. I., IV. and VI. (a). In other words, the desire to know can hardly be *stronger* than is indicated by the returns: it may be *very much weaker*. As far as the Society, therefore, is concerned, the social situation cannot be *more* favourable, and may be indefinitely less so.

(III.) As to the question of *what sort of people* answered. Here, again, we were favoured with many forecasts, which, as usually happens to such *a priori* efforts of the imagination,

<sup>1</sup> Even so, as only about one half of the members answered, this would not necessarily represent more than a quarter of the Branch.



were on the whole mistaken. If I had to answer in a single phrase I should have to say that *all sorts of people* answered; i.e. the answers exhibited an astounding variety of sentiment, far greater than anything we had expected, prepared though we were for a good deal. In reading them one could not help wondering how persons, whose sentiments were so radically different, yet managed to live together in the same world, and felt assured that a real and literal uniformity of belief, the idol to which bigots and fanatics have offered such inhuman sacrifices, was rendered impossible by the psychological constitution of human nature itself. For even when two can be found to subscribe to the same intellectual formulas, the spiritual atmosphere in which they are bathed is different. *Duo si dicunt (faciunt) idem non est idem.*

Not that there could not be made out certain well-marked types of sentiment, or that the different types were equally disposed to answer. In some there was, of course, as we expected, a good deal of reluctance. The questions were bound to seem novel and unusual, unpractical, nay, useless. Even to experts in introspection and self-examination they presented considerable difficulty, which might lead to the unpleasant discovery that one did not have the beliefs and sentiments one would like to have, or supposed oneself to have. And apart from the particular questions, one knew, of course, that some are as immovably unwilling to answer personal questions as others are eager to oblige the world with their personal reactions. The subject of inquiry in such cases is quite a secondary consideration. If you got up an inquiry into what size of hats, or what shape of boots people wore, persons of the first type would refuse on the ground that the subject was "too sacred," while those of the second would hasten to write, "You will be interested to know that I wear  $7\frac{5}{8}$  hats, and abhor pointed toes." The great mass of mankind, however, is intermediate between these extremes, and while reluctant to put itself to any appreciable trouble or expense for the sake of science, can be induced to answer, if pressed, and in order to oblige a friend, and I should judge that the great bulk of our answers came from people of this sort. At all events the *opinions* held do not seem to have seriously hindered any one in answering, provided that

anything else disposed him to do so. Answers came which illustrated every conceivable variety of opinion, and some which one would hardly have deemed conceivable. Hence I am inclined to think that even types of sentiment, which usually resulted only in refusals, were occasionally represented in the answers of people who *only just* consented to answer. Consider *e.g.* the following answers: I. *Yes, if agreeable.* IIa. *Certainly not.* IIb. *Yes.* IIc. *Too complicated.* III. *Too lazy to think it out.* IV. *Not at all.* V. *Never thought about it.* VI. *Now that attention is called to it, would like to know.* Remarks: "*A stupid and useless inquiry.*" This set of answers seems to me to throw a flood of light on a state of mind which is probably very common, but only rarely finds such racy expression. Again, let us see what we can make of the common sentiment that the subject is "too sacred" to be talked about. As a rule people who feel in this way will refuse to answer, but occasionally they analyse their sentiment for us first. *E.g.* a collector reports the refusal of a lady who said it was "*too sacred,*" but *immediately afterwards she honestly added, "besides my feelings fluctuate too much; when I am ill or unhappy I long for annihilation, when I am stronger and happier I would prefer to live after death."* Here the question evidently stimulated to the analysis of a sentiment, which in the great majority of such cases would have been accepted at its face value. Here is another analysis, not so frank, though perhaps on a somewhat higher plane of feeling. A literary man writes in answer to Q. VI. "Even a proof of immortality, supposing that proof to take, let us say, the form of a mathematical demonstration,<sup>1</sup> would seem to me to have something revolting about it, something that in an indefinable way offends the finer feelings, something that, for lack of a better term, I may call 'impious.' In attempting to answer this question I feel myself somewhat in the state of mind that, I fancy, moves many of those, to whom this set of questions is submitted, to refuse to answer any of them."

It is clear that such types of sentiment though they may be common enough, will occur but rarely in the answers.

<sup>1</sup> This notion, that complete proof would assume the form of mathematical demonstration, occurs very commonly. It shows that modern logic has not penetrated far beyond professional circles.

Again there are indications that *negative* answers to Question I. were harder to poll than affirmative. This is natural enough, seeing that

(1) Almost without exception, those who do not desire a future life would be indifferent about it and do not care to inquire into it.

(2) They would suspect a 'psychical research' questionnaire.

(3) They might still be sufficiently impressed by the conventional belief to shrink from an avowal that their desire conflicted with it. And

(4) in spite of the unreserved candour of many of the negative answers, there were signs in others of attempts to conceal their real tendency.

(5) It was quite in accordance with these indications that the scattering answers volunteered from out of the way and non-English speaking places in French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Belgian, Russian, Polish, etc., were, with hardly an exception, enthusiastically affirmative. People did not similarly write from the ends of the earth to tell us that they did not want to live after death.

As regards the religiously "orthodox," I think it probable that they also did not poll their full vote, though there were plenty of answers animated by various forms of Christian sentiment. Here again there are intelligible reasons.

(1) Faith in its weaker forms seems hardly capable of articulate expression, and indeed will hardly bear inspection even by its possessor:

(2) It is often used as a sort of anodyne and excuse for not troubling further about matters 'best left to God.'

(3) Possibly the robuster forms of religious faith, which would be glad of an opportunity to bear witness to the truth, are not now so common as one imagines they once were.

But even if the returns fail to give 'orthodox' sentiment its proper weight, the correction which must be made on this score will only strengthen the argument. For inasmuch as those who have it almost invariably prefer 'faith' to 'knowledge' in answering Question VI., it is manifest that, like the agnostics and indifferents, their answers would only have *reduced* the percentage of those interested in finding out, more or less scientifically, whether there is not a future life.

## V.

With regard to the tone of the answers there was a commendable absence of jocosity. Whether it was that the subject was too solemn even for the funny men or that they did not know in what direction fun could be made of it, it is hard to say; I can only report the almost total absence of buffoonery and even of deliberate flippancy. 'Crank' effusions also were comparatively rare, and easily detected by their inability to *answer the questions* at all. In general the tone of the answers was distinguished by a high degree of sincerity, frequently attaining to extraordinary heights of frankness. In saying this I do not of course mean to affirm that the psychological self-analysis was always correct: I mean to say only that people generally seemed to express as far as they were able what seemed to them the truth about their feelings. Even therefore where the analysis was probably wrong or incomplete, it yielded psychological facts of a sort. For a man's estimate of himself is an important fact about him and a factor in his actions.

On the whole we may draw this conclusion, that though the answers may not reflect the actual distribution of the various types of sentiment, they may yet be taken to be a fair sample for the purpose of the main problem of this inquiry. Or rather it is an unfair sample, in that it *exaggerates* the extent of the desire for knowledge of a future life; but in spite of this unfairness, the returns show a hitherto hardly suspected *weakness* of this desire, and thereby answer the question into which it was necessary for the S.P.R. to inquire. This conclusion may be regarded as fairly probable, if not as strictly demonstrated: it is at all events more probable than any other, and if any one desires to contest it, it is incumbent on him to amass more numerous, exact and decisive data than those we have been able to obtain. I can only wish him God speed and joy of the labour. For the present the results of the *Questionnaire* afford a definite basis of psychological fact for arguing the question such as has not hitherto existed. And further, we are, I think, henceforth entitled to put in a warning and a protest against the fruitless discussion of such questions on grounds of mere *a priori* probabilities, or literary traditions. While admitting that these always afford a certain measure of

truth, and while deeply impressed by the way in which a literary tradition tends not only to perpetuate, but also to verify, itself, I must contend that such grounds of argument are essentially unsafe until supplemented and confirmed by a first hand investigation of the actual facts, wherever this is possible.

And I may add that many other ethical and æsthetical discussions appear to me to flounder in quagmires of this sort.

## VI.

I shall only permit myself to discuss one more point in this paper, viz. whether any practical corollary can be drawn from these scientific results. And I may begin by admitting that a very specious plea may be put in against proceeding to any practical inferences. For why not let the matter rest there? Is not everything for the best in the best of all possible worlds? On your own showing all or nearly all seem admirably adjusted to the present situation, and to have just that degree of knowledge or lack of knowledge which suits them and which they desire.

For consider: those who 'know' that there is, or is not, a future life are content with their inward conviction or scientific reasoning. Those who 'have faith' can feel that it is far higher and holier and more meritorious than the vulgarities of scientific knowledge; and they too are satisfied. Those who delight in uncertainty and the play of fancy, can indulge in these to their heart's content. Those who are addicted to *a priori* demonstrations either way can construct them without stint or fear of verification. The great army of the indifferent can afford to remain neutral towards the inconclusive combats of the fanatics on either side. The matter-of-fact and worldly-minded have a right to ignore a future too uncertain to affect reasonable action. Even those who desire to know are but rarely distracted by a painful craving, and are usually easy to convince that so perilous a knowledge is wisely withheld from them. Even those who (*unreasonably*) fear lest knowledge should blast their hopes are at least secured against the fore-knowledge of their vanity. It is true that a few still exhibit a divergence between desire and expectation, but experience shows that such discrepancies are essentially temporary, and that the one or the other always

adjusts the other into harmony with itself, by a process which is usually rapid and painless and unaccompanied by any lasting distress. In fact, amid all the various phenomena of human psychology, distress due to uncertainty about one's fate after death seems to be one of the rarest.

An optimistic defender of the *status quo* might proceed to adorn his picture of the general satisfaction with loftier appeals to philosophy and religion. He would doubtless improve the occasion to enlarge on the limitations of human faculty and the presumption of seeking to comprehend the unknowable. Or again, he would castigate the impiety of desiring a knowledge which the Divine Wisdom had withheld from us, and urge that if God had intended us to know He would have rendered the fact of immortality more evident to us, by reason, revelation, or experience.

It will be seen, therefore, that a very strong case can be made out *against* the scientific research to which we are pledged, and I am quite sure that however strenuously we may impugn the reasons advanced, we can do but little to mitigate the prejudice from which they spring. The great forces which impel men are not in their essence rational, but inasmuch as it is only by reasoning that they are accessible, they must be argued with as best we can.

I must remark, then, in the first place that a substantially similar case might have been made out against *any* attempt at advancing knowledge. For whatever our ignorance, there always exists a certain contentment with it, a sort of social equilibrium or adjustment, which it is inconvenient and distressing to disturb. And this mood of acquiescence in the actual will always seek to appear respectable by appealing to higher considerations. The classical example of this attitude towards the restless progressiveness of scientific research is the famous letter of the Cadi of Bagdad to Sir A. Layard in reply to a request for statistics concerning the trade and population of his province.<sup>1</sup> Alike for exquisiteness of phrasing and piety of sentiment I have not found anything to touch it in Occidental literature or in the *questionnaire* answers. And certainly no other document reveals so plainly and delightfully how many of these ebullitions of piety really spring from the abysses of indolence,

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II. p. 640.

and are inspired by aversion from what seems uninteresting and unprofitable knowledge. Against the Cadi of Bagdad, however, I should venture to quote the truer and nobler doctrine of Xenophanes:

οὐ τοι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖς παρέδειξαν  
ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον.

"Surely the gods have not displayed all things to men from the beginning, but they, in time, *by seeking*, find out a better way." On its intrinsic merits of course this pseudo-religious argument against research hardly deserves refutation. It is essentially the argument of the Peculiar People against the study and practice of medicine. Nor do I think that it is much more plausible to argue that if God had intended us to know He would have spared us the trouble and the discipline of finding out, than to say that if God had meant us to wear clothes we should have been born, like the angels, with becoming costumes.

With the plea of merely philosophic agnosticism it is possible to make short work. It suffices to say that no one can know where the limits of the possible are laid down until he has tried. And in this case no one has tried in any rational or persistent manner. No one, therefore, has a right to declare this particular knowledge impossible *a priori*.

On the other hand, I should like to appeal for support to the general desire for knowledge as such. But I fear it may be too rare and faint a feeling to bear the burden of so great an enterprise. Moreover, those who are capable of feeling it are for the most part already absorbed in other subjects of research, easier and more directly profitable, if less momentous, than ours. Nevertheless, it should, I think, be borne in mind that the success of this, as of other branches of the Society's work, must continue to depend somewhat on the 'disinterested' assistance of those who seek knowledge 'for its own sake.' But I feel that their might is as nothing compared with that of the ancient, and deep-seated *distrust* of knowledge, of the social instinct which in the past has immolated on a thousand pyres the psychics it had turned into 'witches' and the men of science it had decried as 'magicians.' Here as elsewhere we should deprecate, now as ever, its subtle and nefarious

influence. Experience has always so far shown it to be groundless. Instead of being a source of incalculable dangers, knowledge has always issued in unexpected ameliorations of human life. All analogy, therefore, would lead one to suppose that a gradual and dearly-bought acquisition of progressive knowledge of the laws regulating our *post-mortem* careers would be predominantly good and useful, bracing and invigorating.

For real knowledge can only confirm, it cannot destroy, our hopes. A disproof of a future life must, it seems, be *a priori*, and on that breeding-ground of subtle fallacy, the *a priori* realm, the most ingenious intellects may be defied to discover anything really cogent. As soon as we consent to appeal to evidence, on the other hand, a good deal will depend on the sort of evidence to which we choose to appeal. Hitherto our science has, by accident quite as much as by preference, dwelt on the physical and physiological considerations which render the notion of a future life for the individual so remote and improbable as necessarily to drive it from the foreground of consciousness. But an absolute disproof of the doctrine by such methods seems to be logically inconceivable, for reasons I have elsewhere developed at some length.<sup>1</sup> The effect of all psychic research, on the other hand, must be to keep the mind open to possibilities of a very different order. Psychical science, in so far as it leads to results, can only *confirm* the belief in a future life. But science is always gradual; its advances are as slow, though not as inevitable, as the mills of the gods. There is no fear of our finding out all at once. To demonstrate immortality by a single dramatic *coup de théâtre* is impossible. Even if a case could be produced so complete as to lack no element of logical conclusiveness it would convince none but those who came prepared to be convinced. For, as we have seen, a great many, perhaps a majority, are not psychologically disposed to be convinced. They have not cultivated a mind open for the reception of such novelties. Their old prejudices must be ploughed up before the new knowledge can take root in their mind. And this is a long and difficult process. There is no fear, therefore, that the millennium will come upon us in the

<sup>1</sup> *Humanism*, p. 288; (*Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XV. p. 63), and *Riddles of the Sphinx*, pp. 393-4.



twinkling of an eye. There will always be scope for our hopes to guide our researches, for our faith to outstrip our knowledge. Our metaphysicians will still be able to skirmish in advance of the serried ranks of our scientists, and indeed may conceivably be stimulated to more effective speculations by the discovery of more copious and trustworthy data.

Nor do I think that an advance of psychical knowledge such as we have contemplated would really detract from the value of Faith. Those who now content themselves with "faith," whether it takes the form of religious conviction or of an immediate inner consciousness (which we may call *mystical*, if we define as the essence of mysticism the power of dispensing with reasoning processes in attaining certainty), appear to reach a degree of certainty which seems quite to transcend scientific knowledge and makes it look hopelessly humdrum and superfluous. It seems a profanation to patch upon the radiant robes of faith, upon the seamless splendour of a speckless assurance, a sordid backing laboriously woven of the grey, tenacious threads of scientific inference. Yet these glorious fabrics of faith are not exempt from mortal weakness. Just in proportion as they transcend the support of logic they become exposed to incalculable dangers. They suffer from the vicissitudes of faith in the extra-logical realm in which they float. The spiritual forces that generated them so unaccountably may as unexpectedly destroy them. And, socially, they all exhibit one fatal and fundamental flaw. They are individual and incommunicable; their raptures and their restfulness cannot be transferred to others. Nay, regarded in the cold cruel light of a sceptical reason, their magic sheen appears to leave them. They look rather like paltry gossamer, flimsy structures of a futile imagination, and piteously unfit to clothe the human spirit in a work-a-day world.

And so the science of the day writes down our various faiths as curious, and mainly pathological, products of the imagination, and passes sternly on, in silent condemnation. This utter deprecation of their spiritual experiences, which is implied in the methods, far more than it is expressed in the dogmas, of positive science, is felt of course in various ways by the possessors of these forms of faith. In some it produces alienation from science and all its ways. Others content

themselves with their self-centred and subjective certainty. Others more unselfishly declare that they would like knowledge to be added to faith for the sake of less richly favoured souls. Others again, and theirs is perhaps the most pathetic case of all, experience in their own persons the precariousness of what science so far will not treat as more than a subjective phenomenon. The pressure of an unsympathising social atmosphere drives them into a critical attitude towards their own 'intuitions.' They feel them to be only subjective experiences; they begin to doubt whether they are not phantoms of their imagination, indications merely of the intensity of their longing. In one most interesting case this process of self-criticism went to such lengths that a man who in the fervour of a Methodist conversion-crisis had actually perceived a vision of his Saviour, lapsed insensibly into agnosticism in a non-religious environment, and was only brought back into touch with his religious past by a study of the miracles of 'Theosophy.'

On the whole, therefore, it would seem that reliance upon Faith alone is not free from serious drawbacks, and that it would be impolitic to oppose Faith to Psychical Research. To me it seems rather that each needs the other, and that together they might transfigure the face of life.

I pass from the loftiest to the lowest form of opposition to psychical exploration, that of those who think that one world at a time is enough, and find their present business and amusements too absorbing to bestow any attention, and still less any favour, upon anything that might distract them from their chosen pursuits. Now it will probably be agreed that this objection of practical common-sense to our researches is most formidable, and should if possible be mitigated, if it cannot wholly be removed. It rests moreover on a sound instinct. We naturally try to circumscribe the universe with which man has to sustain relations, because happiness requires adaptation to environment, and the more extensive the environment, the more various and complex must our activities become, and the more difficult, *ceteris paribus*, the achievement of adaptation. But your practical man's objection to taking too wide and visionary a view of life is apt to degenerate into a sentimental repugnance to anything which threatens to expand his immediate horizon. The intensity of this feeling is what has hardly

yet been realised. In its more flippant forms it issues in the declaration that Mrs. Piper's mediumship has added a new terror to death, in its more strenuous it rises to an utter loathing of psychical research and hatred of psychical researchers. Altogether it forms a mass of prejudice almost impervious to argument, so that all I can urge against it will probably be vain. I must point out, however—

(1) That if another world can be scientifically discovered, the two worlds will become one and continuous to a greater or less extent, and be included in the same natural universe.<sup>1</sup> This will reduce the supposed antagonism between them to that which always exists to some extent between the present and the future.

(2) Looking ahead to the future is a characteristic which has been more and more deeply impressed on the human mind by the teachings of experience; and forethought and foreknowledge is in all other departments of knowledge eagerly desired and conspicuously useful. In fact our mental power and progress seem to be largely measurable by this capacity to look ahead.<sup>2</sup> The discovery of a future life, therefore, would seem to contain the possibility of accomplishing the conscious guidance of our present life in a completer and more perfect way.

(3) Human sentiment would soon grow adjusted to the new situation, even in those who now hate to look ahead and anticipate trouble. They would lie awake of nights, thinking of what they should do a thousand years hence, as little as now. Forethought would be tempered with the reflection that "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," into a working compromise at least as conducive to efficiency as the present tacit convention to think as little as may be of the fact that all human undertakings must be cut short, and perhaps be rendered futile, by death. And so the certainty of a future life would impair our activities as little as the certainty of death does now. At present our attitude towards death is the most marvellous triumph of psychological necessity over logic. Everybody admits it, but no one allows it to paralyse his action. Whatever revelations, therefore, psychical science may

<sup>1</sup>Cp. *Proceedings*, S.P.R., Vol. XV. p. 50. *Humanism*, pp. 276-7.

<sup>2</sup>Cp. *Humanism*, p. 257.

have in store for us, it is not credible that they would unnerve us or impair our capacity to carry on the business of life. *At worst* they might hold out the prospect of a distressing or distasteful future. But we do not find that during the dark ages, when men professed to believe that eternal torture was the inevitable lot of the vast majority of their kind, the gaiety of nations was eclipsed or their ferocious energy diminished. *At best* we might gain cognizance of a light that would illumine the rough places of this world and guide our stumbling footsteps. But a miraculous transformation seems as unlikely as a moral cataclysm. Human nature after all is the main factor in our calculations. And plastic though it be, it changes very slowly. It would be quixotic, therefore, to suppose that *Psychical Research* will work a sudden revolution. Even if in the next decades sufficient evidence should accumulate to convince the most obdurate of the truth of spirit communications, the ordinary business of life would go on much as before. People would eat, drink, sleep, work, marry, and amuse themselves as before. There would be no slump in Consols, nor even any perceptible decline in fashionable frivolity. For it is highly improbable that those who could not be broken of the habit of living in and for the moment even by their unquestioning acceptance of the prospect of eternal damnation will cease to play about on the surface of things, whatever evolutions may proceed down in the depths of thought.

## VII.

But, after all, I do not know why we should display such exclusive solicitude about the feelings of those who enjoy the existing uncertainty. Some consideration surely is due also to those who would sincerely like to know, and to whom the lack of knowledge causes grave distress. I have admitted, and even emphasised, that at any given time they form a minority, it may be a small minority. But there is also evidence to show that at some time or other in their lives a large majority pass through a period when the mystery of existence oppresses their spirit and torments them with fears and perplexities which real knowledge would almost certainly show to be groundless. It is true, no doubt, that such periods of anxiety

seem usually to be short, and that after a few years people find quite comfortable beliefs which at first had seemed unbearable. In the aggregate, however, the amount of spiritual distress, in periods of bereavement and mental development, caused by the present state of affairs must be enormous. It forms so needless a blot upon civilisation that it seems a thousand pities that attempts at the recording and scientific exploration of the fleeting clues that float into our view should not be prosecuted with something like the ardour and persistency which mankind has displayed in dealing with the other difficulties of human life.

The first and immediate step, however, must be to arouse a *will to know* adequate to the success of this enterprise. We need to arouse towards Psychical Research the feeling which Francis Bacon aroused towards physical research. Whether or not Bacon was secretly the greatest of poets, there can be no doubt that he was not a great man of science, nor himself a discoverer of new truth. His services to science were immense; but they were those of a lawyer with a genius for epigram. He was also a Lord Chancellor. In virtue of these qualities, and in spite of these defects, he did for physical science (in England at least) what no man of science could have done. He drew general attention to its possibilities; he preached physical research with such eloquence and assiduity that *he actually changed the social atmosphere*, and made men desire the physical knowledge which they had until then distrusted and despised.

Now the last point I wish to insist on in this paper is that in all probability it was chiefly the absence of such desire for knowledge which formed the ultimate reason for the stagnation of science during the Middle Ages. It was not, certainly, the obscurantism of the Christian Church, as is currently alleged; for Greek science had been languishing for some centuries before the establishment of Christianity, which itself was one of the results of a general movement away from science and towards a certain type of religion. For nearly 2000 years few or none seem to have *desired* scientific knowledge, and *therefore* scientific knowledge made no progress.

The only suggestion I can make in explanation of this strange phenomenon is that scientific knowledge had ceased

to seem *desirable*. The immense authority of Aristotle had bullied the world into the belief that pure science was utterly useless, and much too lofty to concern itself with the good for man.<sup>1</sup> Naturally enough the average man retaliated on the inhumanity of science by turning away to intellectual inquiries which seemed to promise more for his interests. Intellectual interest was transferred first to the ethical, and subsequently to the religious, questions debated among the Stoics, Epicureans, and Neoplatonist philosophers, and the adherents of the Judaic, Mithraic, and Christian religions. Thus the social atmosphere became unfavourable to scientific research, and stifled whatever germs thereof sprang up in individual minds. A great genius did indeed arise, before this process had gone far, who did not scorn to apply scientific knowledge to practical needs. But, unfortunately, Archimedes was butchered in the sack of Syracuse by the Romans, and with him perished in all probability all prospects of a school to undo the mischief wrought by Aristotle's superstitious reverence for useless knowledge. Else modern science might have leapt into existence, and started on its beneficent career 2000 years ago.

As it was we had to wait for Bacon. Bacon succeeded in transforming the social atmosphere. He proclaimed that knowledge was power, and that physical science, systematically studied, would give to each his heart's desire. And in spite of the disgust of pedants and obscurantists, and the futile quibbling of metaphysicians, men were glad to follow his inspiring lead; they were encouraged to set to work and to obtain the sort of knowledge they desired. And we all know how plentifully the slowly-ripening fruits of science have rewarded their labours. But, after all, the dark cloud of ignorant contentment was lifted only in part. To this day it has brooded over another portion of the field of knowledge. The desire for knowledge does not yet extend to the subjects of psychical investigation. These are still regarded as uncanny, dangerous, unknowable, useless, and what not. They still await the redeeming advent of a Bacon to bid men open their ears and their eyes, and put forth their strength to sow and reap a fresh and no less precious crop of knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. my essay on "Useless Knowledge" in *Humanism*, p. 18.

Our first task thus becomes that of finding such a second Bacon, such a "trumpeter of a new era" of research,<sup>1</sup> who can stir up, if not all sorts and conditions of men, at least a sufficient number of competent and intelligent men to those sustained and systematic efforts which deserve, and usually achieve, success. Shall we find him in our Society? I do not dare to prophesy, but when I look at the list of our Council I do not despair. For it seems to me that among our Presidents, past and present, we have men of the requisite calibre. And the indifference of a Lord Chancellor may be more than outweighed by the support of a Premier.

#### APPENDIX.

The questionnaire used in the inquiry was as follows:

#### INQUIRY INTO HUMAN SENTIMENT WITH REGARD TO A FUTURE LIFE.

There is a widespread literary tradition that men naturally desire a future life. From this assumed fact it has been variously argued that (1) such a universal desire cannot be destined to disappointment, and (2) it must vitiate convictions and engender illusory evidence in its own support.

But there is some reason to suppose, both from the ordinary conduct of men and from sporadic declarations of individuals, that this tradition is very far from accurately representing the facts, and that these are actually more various and complicated. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that in India the literary tradition seems to be exactly reversed, and it is assumed that men naturally crave for extinction or absorption in the Absolute.

It becomes a question, therefore, what the actual sentiments of men are, and what, consequently, is the actual bias with which

<sup>1</sup> *Buccinator novi temporis*. It is a curious, but most welcome, coincidence that Sir Oliver Lodge, though not present when this paper was read to the Society and unaware of its arguments, should have arrived at a very similar view of Bacon's epoch-making exhortations. See *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XVIII., pp. 3-6.

they are likely to receive the doctrines and the evidence that bear on the subject.

Both these questions are capable of being determined with sufficient precision by instituting a statistical inquiry over a sufficiently wide field—collecting answers until it becomes evident that the percentages of the various types of answer have become constant.

To determine the nature of men's actual sentiments and actual bias should be a matter of great interest, not only to the S.P.R. and psychologists generally, but also to every religious organisation. For both the scientific labours of the former and the moral exhortations of the latter are likely to be in some degree, at least, ineffectual, so long as they are conducted in ignorance, and so in disregard, of what men really want. It is only when the facts have been ascertained that they can be argued from for the various purposes of the scientist, the philosopher and the theologian.

First of all, therefore, it is necessary to discover the nature of human sentiment; and to obtain it in its purity, it is desirable to exclude, as far as possible, all extraneous influences, whether of a religious or of a scientific kind. It is, of course, recognised that these may and often do influence sentiment, that they may engender or check it, as also that there may be a marked divergence between conviction or belief and *sentiment*. But as it is primarily the nature of the *sentiment* which has to be determined, these other considerations should be excluded as far as possible.

*Hence the subjoined questions should be understood as directly referring only to the personal preferences, sentiments or desires of those who answer them, quite irrespective of their religious faith or reasoned convictions, the influence of which, where it exists, may be recorded in answer to Question III.*

Please return this *questionnaire* when answered to

DR. RICHARD HODGSON,  
5 BOYLSTON PLACE,  
BOSTON, MASS, U.S.A.

*N.B.—All names will be regarded as strictly confidential.*

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#### QUESTIONS.

- I. Would you prefer (a) to live after 'death' or (b) not?
- II. (a) If I. (a), do you desire a future life whatever the conditions might be?



- (b) If not, what would have to be its character to make the prospect seem tolerable? Would you, *e.g.* be content with a life more or less like your present life?
- (c) Can you say what elements in life (if any) are felt by you to call for its perpetuity?
- III. Can you state *why* you feel in this way, as regards questions I. and II.?
- IV. Do you NOW feel the question of a future life to be of urgent importance to your mental comfort?
- V. Have your feelings on questions I., II. and IV. undergone change? If so, when and in what ways?
- VI. (a) Would you like to *know for certain* about the future life, or (b) would you prefer to leave it a *matter of faith*?

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#### HINTS FOR COLLECTORS.

1. Answers should be collected by preference from educated adults.
2. Collectors should fill up their own papers first, and get the others answered *independently*.
3. Any answer, AFFIRMATIVE OR NEGATIVE, is valuable as a psychological fact.
4. Even a *refusal to answer* is a valuable indication of feeling, which it is important to record. In such case, the collector should, if possible, ask the reason of the refusal, and should then fill up a census paper with the name, etc., of the refuser, inserting the reason given for refusing under the head of *Remarks*.

STATE :—*Name*.....

*Address*.....

*Age*..... *Sex*.....

*Nationality*.....

*Profession*.....

*Date*.....

## ANALYSIS OF THE ANSWERS TO QUESTION VI.

	British.	Indian.	Colonial.	American.	S. P. R. Amer. Branch.	Amer. Psychol. Assn.	Amer. College Students.	Ethic. Soc.	Foreign.	Total.
1. "Knowledge": Yes to Q. IV., - - -	153	36	20	283	127	3	3	21	35	681
2. " : No " - - -	97	26	8	275	43	7	15	33	7	511
3. " : 'on general principles,' etc.,	30	4	-	74	6	2	3	4	-	123
4. " : if there is a future life and it is pleasant,	25	3	-	47	16	-	6	3	2	102
5. " : but think it impossible, -	21	11	-	21	-	1	-	9	1	64
6. " : negative or doubtful answers to Q. I.,	53	18	3	92	5	2	4	28	7	212
7. " : if, or that, there is no future life,	10	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	13
8. Not knowledge, - - - -	130	8	8	202	15	6	5	39	2	415
9. 'Indifferent,' - - - -	23	4	1	53	3	-	1	18	4	107
10. 'Faith,' - - - -	199	41	20	389	18	5	47	22	8	749
11. Certain there is a future life, - - -	45	8	7	84	13	-	-	4	17	178
12. " no " - - -	24	4	1	19	-	1	-	11	3	63
13. Not answered, - - - -	10	6	2	29	2	-	-	-	14	63
	820	170	70	1569	248	27	84	193	100	3281

In addition there were 42 American answers to differently-worded (simplified) questions, which afforded in-sufficient data for analysis and have therefore been excluded.

## III.

## THE POLTERGEIST AT CIDEVILLE.

BY ANDREW LANG.

IN the history of the Poltergeist, the case of the Presbytère of Cideville (1850-1851) is best known through Mr. Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World* (London, 1861, pp. 195-203). The author cited M. de Mirville's *Fragment d'un Ouvrage Inédit*, a pamphlet which I have failed to procure. By the kindness of the Marquis d'Eguilles,—a descendant of the French envoy who accompanied Prince Charles from Edinburgh to Derby and Culloden,—the Society has received an authenticated copy of the original documents of what was practically a trial for witchcraft before the Juge de Paix of Yerville in 1851. To the present Juge de Paix we owe the privilege of having the records viewed and transcribed. It will be remarked that Mr. Dale Owen omitted the negative evidence, and certain rulings of the court, unfavourable to the innocence of the alleged sorcerer, who appeared as plaintiff in a case of libel against M. Tinel, Curé of Cideville. Public judicial proceedings began on January 7th, 1851, before M. Folloppe, Juge de Paix. Thorel, a shepherd swain, summoned M. Tinel for defamation of character. M. Tinel had described various phenomena of the usual sort, invading his house, and persecuting two boys, his pupils.<sup>1</sup> They included a

<sup>1</sup> "Thus, according to [M. Tinel], sharp and distinct raps would be heard behind the wainscot of his apartments; a voice, responding to the summons of two young children, his pupils, would converse with them, make promises or threats, and sing various airs, notably that of *Maitre Corbeau*. Now shovels and tongs, having got tired of the hearth, would give themselves up to wild dances, afterwards returning quietly to resume their accustomed places; now tables and chairs would stamp and spin round, running all over his house as if they were playing at prisoner's base or hide-and-seek, never ceasing from their

black hand which slapped one of the boys. He accused Thorel of producing these phenomena, declared that Thorel knelt and begged his pardon, and he induced Pain, a sheep farmer, to discharge Thorel. He also beat Thorel with a stick "to the effusion of blood."

Tinel replied that he only charged Thorel with "arrogating to himself the quality of sorcerer," and that he struck Thorel in self-defence.

The judge adjourned the case to January 28th, 1851, for evidence to be collected.

The first witness for the plaintiff, Bézuel, spoke to much hearsay matter. He had visited M. Tinel's house, in his absence, M. Tinel inviting him to stay for a fortnight. He did not, but visiting the place with M. Robert de Saint Victor (brother of Paul de Saint Victor?), he witnessed nothing unusual.

Andrieu, the next witness, had heard of the affair from Tinel, and other hearsay matter. He had, however, heard raps produced at the order of the younger pupil, whom he placed "in a position in which he could not produce any noise by himself." He heard a M. Fontaine call from the window (he himself being in the garden) that he had caught the boy cheating. The boy bellowed that he had not cheated, and offered to stand on the window sill, where he could not touch a table which, according to Fontaine, he had moved in a normal way.

Masson, a gendarme, was told that objects flew about and broke the windows. He himself saw nothing occur during an hour and a half of observation.

Bourrienne, also a gendarme, had the same negative experience.

Stanislas Huet had only hearsay matter.

gambols until covered with perspiration and worn out with fatigue. Sometimes knives lying on a table would be hurled by some occult and irresistible force, and bury themselves deep in the walls. Sometimes penknives or inkstands would be suddenly seized with a desire to frolic, and, dashing against the windows of the presbytery, would break the panes, afterwards returning ashamed to ask the forgiveness of their young owners. Sometimes, finally, a distinctly visible hand belonging to some invisible body would inflict the most prodigious blows on the cheeks of the two young acolytes." (From the charge brought by Thorel against Tinel.)

Gustave Lemonnier, the younger of M. Tinel's pupils, aged twelve, told his story. Raps began, when he was alone, on November 26th, and continued. All sorts of objects flew about. A black hand struck the witness. He was haunted by a spectre in a blouse. A child's voice was heard by him. He did not ask to be allowed to go home. Meeting Thorel, when with Tinel, he recognised in Thorel the spectre in the blouse. The boy spoke about the incident of Fontaine's accusation of cheating.

Bunel, aged fourteen, the other pupil, corroborated Lemonnier, who "lost consciousness" and "had a nervous attack" after meeting Thorel. The witness showed a black eye, caused by a stamping iron which flew at his face. He attested many eccentric movements of objects.

Thorel then asked that nine questions, partly as to Fontaine, might be put to witness.

The Judge disallowed them as "contrary to the dignity of justice," and adjourned the court.

The next witness, M. de Bagneux, spoke to M. Tinel's anxiety to have the affair investigated. He himself, alone with the boy, heard "the noise" beat several tunes: he could not "discover the cause."

Auguste Huet, the next witness, by his request had raps struck under his fingers on a table. He was "convinced that it was not the boy who did it, nor any of the people of the house." The boy's arms were folded at the time. A tune was rapped out by his request.

Maxime Henry, as to the phenomena, spoke only from hearsay.

Cheval spoke to the scene in which Thorel knelt to Tinel, and was beaten by him. He mentioned, on hearsay, that Thorel had boasted of his sorceries, and, by way of an evidence, had caused a person to fall down whenever he struck a blow against his hut. He then said that he had not seen but heard of the kneeling and beating incident. But he did see the tongs and shovel at the house of M. Tinel "leave the hearth and go into the middle of the room." They were put back, and rushed out again. "My eyes were fixed on them to see what moved them, but I saw nothing at all." (This witness was a farmer, aged forty.) He saw "a stocking dart

like a thunderbolt from beside the bed on which the children were sleeping, to the opposite end of the room." Lying in bed with the boys, his hands on their hands, and his feet on their feet, he "saw the coverlet dart away from the bed."

Leroux, Curé of Saussay, aged thirty, said :

I have to add that when at the Presbytery of Cideville, I saw things which I have been unable to explain to myself. I saw a hammer, moved by some invisible force, leave the spot where it lay and fall in the middle of the room without making more noise than if a hand had gently laid it down ; a piece of bread lying on the table darted under the table ; and we being placed as we were, it was impossible that any of us could have thrown it in that way. I also saw, after the Curé of Cideville and I had shaved, all the things we had used for the purpose placed as if by hand on the floor ; the young pensionnaire of M. Tinel having called our attention to this, M. Tinel and I went upstairs to assure ourselves of the fact. Perhaps the child had had time to do this ; but on coming away again, we had scarcely descended six steps of the stairs when the child told us that everything had been put back in its place. I went back alone, and found everything was, in fact, in its place, with the exception of the mirror, and I am certain that the child could not have put everything back in its place in that way in so short a time. It seems to me inexplicable. Since that I have heard noises at the Presbytery at Cideville. I took every precaution in listening to them, even placing myself under the table to make sure that the children could do nothing, and yet I heard noises, which seemed to me, however, to come more especially from the wainscot. I said in connection with this that the noises seemed to me so extraordinary that I would vouch for them with my blood. I noticed that M. Tinel seemed to be somewhat exasperated at these noises and at their persistence, especially on several nights during which I slept with him, when he woke up frightened about it all.

The Judge disallowed a question to this witness, with the usual formula. Much frivolous hearsay evidence followed, and need not be repeated. Somebody had heard somebody say that M. Tinel said that the two boys made the noises.

For the defence M. de Mirville, aged forty-eight, was called, and said :

Last Wednesday I went to the Presbytery of Cideville and said to the 'cause,' "When you wish to reply affirmatively rap once ;

when you wish to reply negatively rap twice." Immediately rap was heard. "Then you will be able to tell me how many letters there are in my name?" Eight raps were heard, the last more distinct than the others, apparently to make one understand that it was the last. "My baptismal name now?" Reply, five raps. "And now my fore-name which figures on the register of the Civil List, and which no one has hitherto called me by." Immediately, seven raps; "and the names of my children, first the eldest?" Five raps,—quite correct, she is called Aline. "Then of the youngest?" Nine raps, a mistake, immediately rectified, five raps were struck. She is called Blanche. "Now let us pass to my age; strike as many raps as I have years." Instantly the raps succeeded each other with such rapidity that I was obliged to stop them in order to count them, and I demanded more slowness; forty-eight raps were then heard very distinctly, the forty-eighth being more accentuated than the others. "That is not all. How many months do you reckon between the first of January of this year, and the moment I shall be forty-nine?" Three very loud raps and one faint one followed. "What does the faint one mean? probably half a month?" One rap. "Good! but it is not finished. How many days now between that half month and my birthday?" Nine raps, the last being more accentuated. Perfectly correct, I shall be forty-nine on the 24th of April of this year. . . "Let us pass on to the place of my abode. How many letters are there in its name?" Eight raps; "and in the name of my Commune? Be careful not to make the usual mistake." Ten raps were heard. Now I live in the Commune of Gomerville, the name of which is often written with two m's, a mistake not made by the 'cause.' It was demonstrated to me by this, that I had to do with an old acquaintance—I hope not a friend. "Let us pass to music; you are said to be a musician, the other day you sang the first part of Rossini's *Stabat*, they say; since you know the first part you ought to know the second part, the bass part *P peccatis suae gentis*; let me hear it." Instantly the mysterious agent rapped the rhythm of the first two bars correctly enough but in the third committed an irregularity which slightly spoiled the rhythm. On my remarking this, it began again, corrected the mistake, and the passage was recognisable. Two or three popular airs, such as, *J'ai du bon Tabac*, *Maître Corbeau*, etc. . . . were articulated rapidly and without any mistake. The other pieces from the Italian repertoire which I demanded, were perfectly

known to it. "Come," I said to it, "you are a poor dilettante. Now follow me if you can." I then hummed a waltz from Guillaume Tell. It listened at first without doing anything; then followed me exactly while I sang it; and several times during the morning, when we were no longer thinking of it, it came back to the same piece and tried to execute it alone. The pupils, while this was going on, had not discontinued their work; I don't think the Curé came into the room during the whole time, but I must admit I did not attach much importance to this point. I have said that I was not a witness to material facts, but I must add that one of the children said to me, "Look, Sir, look at this desk knocking against the other"; but as the child was in front of the desk I did not attach much importance to this fact,—not that I believed him to be the cause of it. My not mentioning this at first was because I wished to observe the most scrupulous exactitude. [To the interpellation of the defendant with a view to knowing whether the witness believed the Curé of Cideville might be the author of these facts, he replied]: I should be much surprised if any one within these walls could seriously believe that. I do not believe it possible to produce these phenomena by natural means, and the cause must be supernatural. By supernatural causes I mean an intelligent force surpassing that of man and of nature. [The witness being interpellated by the plaintiff with a view to knowing if he thought these phenomena could be produced by a poor shepherd unable to read or write, replied], I do not think he could produce them by himself, but he might with the assistance of an occult and supernatural cause. I am the author of one work only, entitled, *Les peuples et les Savants en matière de religion*. [The witness was interpellated as to whether he had received a visit from the Curé of Cideville on the 8th day of January last, when the latter was seen in company with another priest at the landing stage of Nointot, 12 kilometres (7½ miles) from Gomerville. He replied], I never saw the Curé of Cideville before Wednesday last, and I was completely ignorant of the existence of a Commune of the name of Cideville.

Madame de Saint Victor, aged fifty-six, said :

Being at the Presbytery I heard some 'cause' which was unknown to me make raps intelligently. The *Angelus* was ringing and I said to the 'cause,' "Rap the tune of the *Angelus*," and the tune was rapped. I also heard the tune of *Maître Corbeau* rapped out and that of *Drinn Drinn*, quite perfectly. I think it was on the 8th



December before mass at Cideville that I saw the child, who said he had received a slap from an invisible hand. The same day after Vespers, when I was at the Presbytery of Cideville standing quite apart from the other people there, I felt an invisible force seize me by the mantle and give me a vigorous shake. The same day also I saw three persons sitting on a small table in the Presbytery and it moved along the floor in spite of the efforts of two people to hold it back. Several people were there, amongst others my *femme de chambre*, but I cannot precisely say who the others were. Another day I saw the child sitting on a chair with his feet off the ground and his back not leaning on the chairback, yet the chair rocked with a movement which the child could not have given it, ending with the chair falling in one direction and the boy in another. The child was much frightened at this. A week ago when I was alone with the children I saw the two desks at which they were working fall over and the table on the top of them. The same day I took the children some St. Benoist medals in which I had faith, and every time the medals were placed on the desks not the least sound was produced there, the noise then being heard behind me in the wall cupboard; but as soon as the medals were withdrawn from the desks the noise was heard again in the desks. The same day the noise rapped out the tune of *Maître Corbeau*, and on my remarking, "Do you know nothing but that, then?" it sang the air of *Au clair de la lune*, and that of *J'ai du bon Tabac*. Yesterday, again, I saw a candlestick leave the chimneypiece in the kitchen and go and hit the back of my *femme de chambre*, and a key lying on the table struck the child's ear. I must say that I cannot tell precisely where the key was, as I did not see it start on its flight, but only saw it arrive. I was not frightened, only surprised. My son was with me when I heard the *Angelus* as well as the two children and the Curé, but during the other airs I was alone with the children. It was not possible for the children to do these things; I watched their feet and their hands, and could see all their movements. I think the shepherd Thorel could not have done them unless he had made a compact with the devil; for it seemed to me there was something diabolical in it all.

M. Robert de St. Victor, aged twenty-three, said:

I was a witness at the Presbytery of Cideville of things I cannot explain to myself. I heard a 'cause' unknown to me make raps,

particularly rapping the tune *Maitre Corbeau*, and the rhythm of the *Angelus*. I asked this 'cause' to rap Rossini's *Stabat Mater*; the tune was exactly rendered. A week ago I went again to the Presbytery, and was alone with the children and the old servant maid; I placed one of the children in each of the windows of the room upstairs, I being outside, but in a position to observe all their movements in the position they were placed in; besides, they could not have moved much without risk of falling, and I then heard raps struck in the room, similar to those of a mallet. I went up to the room and I saw one of the children's desks coming towards me, with no visible force to push it; however, I did not see it at the moment of its starting. I am convinced that the children had nothing to do with this, since they were still standing in the windows. Being one day at the Presbytery with the Mayor, I heard several loud blows such as the children could not have produced. I put my hand and ear against the wainscot, and very distinctly felt the vibrations and the place where the blows were struck. I was present several times at the scenes at the Presbytery. It seems to me impossible that the Curé could have produced them. Often he was not in the Presbytery, and when he was there he was seated beside me. [The witness being interpellated as to whether he thought it possible that the shepherd was the author of these phenomena, replied], No, I do not even know this shepherd.

The fourth witness, Bouffay, said:

Being at the Presbytery of Cideville, I saw M. Tinel put his hand lightly on Thorel's shoulder, saying, "You have spoken very imprudently; I should not be surprised if you know something about what is happening at the Presbytery," and the child then said, "I know this man to be the one who has been following me about for a fortnight." M. Tinel told Thorel to go on his knees and ask the child's pardon. Thorel fell on his knees and begged pardon, saying, "I don't know what for." While on his knees, Thorel put out his hand as if with the intention of taking hold of the child's blouse in diabolical mischief. I know nothing of the facts referred for proof, that is, nothing personally, only from hearsay. I went several times to the Presbytery at Cideville; the first time the noise was continual in those rooms only where the children were, both in the church and at the Presbytery. The 'noise' was intelligent and obedient only on this first visit. The noise was sometimes so loud that once when I was lying in the same room with the children I thought

the ceiling would come down. When day came the idea occurred to us of knocking nails in the spot where there was rapping; and a very plaintive voice was heard, the sounds of which were unintelligible. I also saw, both upstairs and downstairs, the perfectly isolated table move without any force that I could see to cause the movement. On the second visit I scarcely saw anything. On the third visit I saw pretty much the same things as on the first. I noticed that the children were perfectly motionless when the sound was produced, so could not have made it themselves. I heard it when the Curé was absent from the Presbytery as well as in his presence. It was impossible that either he or the children should have had anything to do with the noise, because it was too loud. I forgot to say that when the child heard a voice begging his pardon, we all fell on our knees and prayed God to forgive those who were persecuting us.

[Being interpellated by the plaintiff as to whether the witness thought the shepherd could have produced these phenomena, he replied that he did not know the shepherd's capabilities. Being interpellated by the defendant, the witness said that when he returned with M. Tinel and the children from the house of one of the inhabitants of the Commune, where they had slept on account of the noises at the Presbytery, just as the children were going up to their room to ascertain if all was at an end, he saw a phantom-like vapour go with great rapidity through the kitchen door towards the room where the children were. When the shepherd Thorel came to the Presbytery and threw himself on his knees to M. Tinel he said he had come to fetch an organ.]

The sixth witness, Bréard, said:

During December last I passed two nights at the Presbytery of Cideville. On the first I heard an irritating noise during part of the night which prevented my sleeping. The next morning at breakfast, being at table in company with M. Tinel and the Abbé Bouffay, I heard an alarming knock struck on the floor beneath the table. I am certain that it was neither the children nor M. Tinel who did this, any more than the shepherd, whom I do not know. When I had returned to Rouen, I received a letter from M. Tinel asking me to get M. Pressier, professor of physics, to come and look into the phenomena which were being produced at the Presbytery of Cideville. I saw M. Pressier, but he could not come.

I cite this witness to show that M. Tinel appealed to science, and that he appealed in vain!

Evidence to threats by Thorel against Tinel, in the menacing style of the Drummer of Tedworth, was given by a hearer of the same, Varin, aged thirty-seven, grocer; by Le Tellier, twenty-seven, farrier; Grenet, aged fourteen; Foulogne, aged forty-eight; du Forestel, a weaver, aged thirty-seven, and others.

Judgment was pronounced on February 15th, 1851, after hearing counsel. The learned judge said, "The most clear result of all the evidence is that the cause [*i.e.* of the extraordinary events at the Presbytery of Cideville] remains unknown."

As the plaintiff had himself spread the report that he caused the occurrences, and had shown contrition on two occasions, the defendant had done him no technical wrong. In thumping the plaintiff, who tried to handle him, the defendant acted in legitimate self-defence. Thorel was non-suited, and had to pay about £6 in costs.

Dale Owen quotes de Mirville to the effect that the boys were removed to another Presbytère, behaved well, and were not attended by the Poltergeist, "as far as appears."

The experienced reader will see that, in the seventeenth century, Thorel would have been burned, on the "spectral evidence" of the appearances to the younger boy. The sceptic will be sure that the boys caused all the trouble because they were tired of staying with M. Tinel. The claim of Fontaine to have caught the younger boy in the act of cheating will be accepted, and all the affirmative evidence will be dismissed in the usual way. The present writer cannot form a conjecture as to how the things were done, or made to appear to be done, but they are the ancient traditional things, *quae semper, quae ubique, quae ab omnibus*. They are attested on oath by persons of various ranks, ages, and education, and the evidence is not remote from the time of the events. My one wish is that somebody would find a boy or girl who will, at least, attempt to produce the phenomena in the presence of a committee of the Society. If the things can be done so easily, will no young person do them?

## SUPPLEMENT.

## I.

## THE HISTORY OF A HAUNTED HOUSE.

*Reported by*

DR. J. GRASSET,

*(Professeur de Clinique Médicale à l'Université de Montpellier)**in "Le Spiritisme devant la Science." (pp. 11-65).<sup>1</sup>**Translated and abridged by Vera Larminic.*

THE material for the following study was furnished by the case of a patient who passed some weeks in our wards, a young girl suffering from hysteria, and closely connected with the tragi-comic history of this "haunted house." It is a curious story, and I am justified in treating of it here, as it shows the interest of these questions for medical men, since it is the physician who has oftenest to confront the difficulties to which such facts give rise, and to treat the maladies they engender or stimulate.

It will be seen, moreover, how such a story at once suggests and brings into conflict the three great rival theories of fraud, spiritism, and a magnetic fluid, all equally false in my view if one attempts to apply them to all cases of the kind. These are the three principal theories, however, to which accounts of haunted houses and various alleged supernatural manifestations are immediately referred, the *sceptics* maintaining that all are due to fraud and trickery, the *mystics* invoking the agency of the dead, of

<sup>1</sup> This translation is made by the kind permission of Dr. Grasset. The narrative in *Le Spiritisme devant la Science* is reprinted from pp. 379-414 of Dr. J. Grasset's *Leçons de Clinique Médicale faites à l'Hôpital Saint-Eloi de Montpellier*. Avril 1898 à Décembre 1902. 4ème Série (Montpellier and Paris, 1903).

angels or of demons, and the *spiritists* holding to the theory of emanations of a magnetic fluid.

In the following account I shall endeavour to show that the scientific truth does not lie in any one of these three theories; that the whole is not due to fraud, but that, without the intervention of either spirits or fluids, there remain certain facts as to automatic movements both unconscious and involuntary, which form a coherent chapter of science and physiology. The facts of this case are taken from the very careful and detailed notes of my colleague, Dr. Calmette, and must be given at some length to make the account sufficiently precise and complete.

The scene of the disturbances is an unimportant town, which for convenience we may call Daïmonopolis, in the Grand Duchy of Gérolstein. In a suburb of this town lives the family A—, consisting of the father and mother, with their six children, and the paternal grandfather.

The grandfather, a day labourer by occupation, is an honest man, albeit a trifle superstitious. His son, the father of the family, is an agricultural labourer, aged thirty-one, a man of mild and rather nervous disposition and the second husband of his wife, who is an intelligent woman of forty, southern, vivacious, and very garrulous.

Of the six children, two, Jean and Jeanne, are by the first marriage; the former, aged twenty, is a day labourer, a quiet young man, going out very little except during working hours, and of a slightly childish disposition; the latter, Jeanne, is the patient who is being treated for hysteria in the Achard-Espéronnier ward up to the present time. She is fifteen years of age, frank-looking and intelligent, but with atrocious morals. We shall return to her later on. The remaining four children are by the second marriage and are aged respectively eight, six, four, and two years old.

The A.'s inhabit two small houses, separated from one another by a garden. House No. 1 looks out on one side into the road and on the other into the garden, and consists of a ground floor only, comprising a suite of four rooms—the kitchen (A), a large room (B) where Jean sleeps, a small room (C) occupied by the grandfather, and a store-room (D), where a goat and some fowls are kept. The three rooms A, B, and C communicate with each other, but only one, the kitchen (A), has a door opening upon the terrace, facing the garden, so that it is impossible to reach either of the other two rooms without first passing through the kitchen.

Room B is lighted by a window overlooking the terrace, and the grandfather's room (C) by a tiny dormer window. There is no communication between any of the rooms and the road. The garden surrounding the house is enclosed by a wall which has two openings, one into the road and the other into the waste land on which stands House No. 2.

This second house, like the first, has no upper storey, and contains four rooms, arranged as follows: A kitchen (E), facing House No. 1; behind this two rooms divided by a partition, the dining-room (F) and a bedroom (G), in which sleep M. and Mme. A——, with the three youngest children; and behind these again a fourth room (H), shared by Jeanne and her eight-years-old sister. The kitchen (E) has a large glass door, whence can be seen through the opening in the boundary wall House No. 1 and its terrace opposite. This room communicates both with rooms F and G, and both the latter open into room H.

The A.'s rent No. 2, but the owner of No. 1, pending the sale or letting of this house, allows them to occupy it free of rent. Some time ago its probable sale was talked of, which would have entailed the departure of the A.'s, who thus saw before them the prospect of having to leave. Shortly afterwards the phenomena about to be described broke out.

The grandfather and the eldest son, Jean, go to their work regularly every morning, taking their mid-day meal with them, and only returning in the evening for supper.

On December 4th, 1901, Jeanne went into her grandfather's room after he and her brother had gone out, to fetch some linen, when, according to her own account, she noticed nothing unusual. When Mme. A—— went in to make the bed in the afternoon, however, she was astonished to find the bed upset, with the mattress rolled up at the foot and the bed-clothes in disorder on the floor. She asked Jeanne if it was she who had done this, but Jeanne denied having touched the things. Her mother thereupon took her into the room and showed her what had happened. Jeanne said that it had not been in that state in the morning, and that it could not be her grandfather's doing, as the bed had not been touched when she went in earlier in the day. Notwithstanding this, when her father-in-law came home that evening, Mme. A—— accused him of having upset his bed by way of a joke. In great astonishment he declared that he had not touched the bed after getting up, and thought the phenomena must be of supernatural origin, probably

caused by the spirits of his son and daughter returning to torment him. (One of his sons had died in 1895, and his daughter in 1887.) When Jean came home in his turn he was told of what had occurred, and his grandfather repeated his theory of supernatural intervention, and was anxious to have a Mass said for the souls of his children; but Jean merely laughed at this explanation, saying that, if none of the household had touched the bed, it must be a practical joke on the part of some one, as it could not have upset itself.

On the morning of December 5th, after the men had gone to work, Mme. A—— called Jeanne, who was not yet up, to come and see if the grandfather's bed had again been disturbed. They crossed the garden together to the other house (No. 1), and going into the grandfather's room found the bed-clothes in confusion in the middle of the room. Jeanne said that her grandfather must have done it for his own amusement; and Mme. A——, being of the same opinion, in order to give him a lesson, did not remake the bed, but left things as they were.

In the evening she reproached her father-in-law with some warmth, saying that he should not have done it, as he might have frightened the children. He, however, denied having done anything, and Jean took up his defence, asserting that they had gone out together that morning, and that when they left the bed had not been disturbed. Upon this the grandfather reverted to his original hypothesis, and reproached his daughter-in-law for not having had Masses said to pacify the spirits, but Jean and his father laughed this idea to scorn.

On the morning of the 6th, however, as Mme. A—— continued to accuse him, the grandfather sent Jean to fetch her, so that she might satisfy herself, before he went out to his work, as to the state of his room. When Mme. A—— came over with Jeanne from the other house (No. 2), everything was in order in the room (C), and the grandfather himself was in the kitchen preparing the soup for breakfast, but keeping an eye on his room through the open doors of Jean's room (B). The latter was also working in the kitchen, while Jeanne and her mother were washing clothes in the garden.

All at once, the grandfather on turning round saw the bed-clothes and eiderdown quilt of his bed lying in the middle of his room. He drew Jean's attention to the fact, and Mme. A—— was called, when on going into the room (C) they found the bed upset, and the quilt, etc., thrown into the middle of the room, as on the previous day.

Not knowing how to explain this phenomenon, Mme. A—— accused



them both of amusing themselves at her expense; but Jean declared that his grandfather had not left the kitchen, where he was making the soup, and that he himself had been at work in the same room.

The things were then put in order again, and they went away to their work. The father of the family was also working out of the house, but started earlier, coming home as they did in the evening, and Jeanne went daily to take him his dinner. On this particular day she started with it as usual at a quarter to twelve. At noon Mme. A—— dined with the other children in Jean's room, and when she went into the grandfather's room afterwards everything was in its place. She then left the children to play in the kitchen (A), and went to visit a neighbour.

In the course of their play, the two children of six and eight years old went into the room B, where they were much astonished to find the bed-clothes and a mattress on the floor, and ran to fetch their mother. At this moment Jeanne returned; Mme. A—— met her at the garden-gate, and they entered the house together. Everything was in confusion in room C, and the bedding (mattress, eider-down quilt, etc.) had been carried thence into room B.

Jeanne said that her grandfather must be right after all, and that they had better have a Mass said.

Having put things once more in order, Mme. A—— left Jeanne with the children in the kitchen (A), and went out again, but a few minutes later they came to fetch her in a state of great alarm, as the bed-clothes had been taken a second time into Jean's room (B), where they now lay in complete confusion.

Mme. A—— put everything back in its place, and established herself with her work in the kitchen (A) to watch the adjoining room.

Nothing unusual then occurred. In the evening, when the family were all together, it was decided henceforward to cook and eat their meals in the other house (No. 2).

Towards six o'clock, having ascertained that all was in order, Mme. A—— was herself the last to leave No. 1, when she shut the door of the kitchen, but did not lock it, since the lock had been out of order for a long time past.

The entire family were now established in house No. 2, with the exception of M. A——, who never came home until seven o'clock. A little parsley being needed in the preparation of the supper, Mme. A—— asked her father-in-law to fetch her some from the

garden-plot near the terrace of the other house. It was dark, however, and as he was afraid to go out alone so close to No. 1, she finally went with him herself, and having cut the parsley, expressed a desire to go in and see whether the bed had been disturbed. The grandfather said that they could not expect it to have been touched already, but Mme. A—— replied that, as it had been done three times before that day, it might very well have been done a fourth time. They went in accordingly, and were astounded to find all the bed-clothes of Room C in Room B.

Much alarmed, the grandfather refused to sleep any longer in this room, and asked to have a bed made up for him in the other house, but to this Mme. A—— demurred, saying that if he really were haunted by spirits he would bring them with him. Jean brought the discussion to a satisfactory conclusion by proposing to share his own bed with his grandfather, with the remark that it would be a means of finding out whether it was against the latter personally that the spirits bore a grudge, as in that case his bed would now be disturbed. During the night of the 6th to the 7th nothing unusual occurred in the grandfather's room, and on the morning of December 7th, having left everything in order in the house, they came to breakfast in the kitchen of No. 2.

Mme. A—— went in the meantime into No. 1, and found everything in confusion in Room C. She returned to tell her father-in-law and Jean, and they went back together to No. 1, where they found to their amazement that not only the grandfather's room, but also Jean's bed had been disturbed, and the bed-clothes moved into the middle of the room, much to Mme. A——'s astonishment, as she said that a moment before only the grandfather's bed had been touched.

They put everything in order again, and dispersed to their several occupations, but when Mme. A—— went into the house at eleven o'clock in the morning, she found the sheets, blankets, quilts, and mattresses from the beds in both rooms (B and C) piled up in the kitchen (A). She then gave up setting things in order, and returned to the other house, where Jeanne was, and ten minutes later the latter, looking in the direction of house No. 1, saw the bedding of the two beds out on the terrace. She went hurriedly to tell her mother, and came back with her; but on reaching the door of the kitchen (E), which was within sight of the terrace, she uttered piercing cries for help, and when Mme. A—— ran to her in great alarm to know what the matter was, declared that she had seen a skeleton stretched out on the mattress on the terrace.

Mme. A—— was as much terrified as her daughter, and not daring to remain any longer even in house No. 2, she left everything and went with the children to a neighbour's house, while Jeanne went to take her father his dinner.

The facts now soon got abroad; the story spread through the neighbourhood of the town, and caused a great deal of gossip, each person interpreting the phenomena in his own way. Amongst them, however, they somewhat reassured Mme. A——, and she was accompanied home, and helped to put things in order. Nothing further occurred that day, but in the evening M. A—— decided to keep a vigilant watch on the Sunday following, with several of his friends so that should the affair be a practical joke, they might be sure of catching its perpetrators. That night, the grandfather again slept with Jean.

On Sunday (December 8th), at seven o'clock in the morning, M. A—— and two of his friends established their watch in the kitchen of No. 1. At eight o'clock, not having seen anything suspicious they went to breakfast in No. 2, without taking the precaution of locking the doors behind them, and when they returned at about 8.30 the beds had been upset. They were re-made, and at noon M. A—— and his friends locked the door between the grandfather's and Jean's rooms, but were unable to lock the kitchen door, as the lock was out of order. They then went to lunch. On their return they found the inner door between rooms B and C broken open, the lock torn off, and everything in confusion in the two rooms.

On Monday, the 9th, and Tuesday, the 10th, the same phenomena occurred, and a priest who was called in to "exorcise the spell" had no opinion to give as to the cause of the objects being transported.

On Wednesday, the 11th,<sup>1</sup> a neighbour, M. B——, a Parisian and worker in ivory, advised them to set a trap in the two rooms in which the phenomena occurred, with a view to ascertaining whether they were or were not of supernatural origin. At his suggestion they fastened the bed-clothes by means of threads to the bedsteads, affixed seals in various places, and strewed the floor with sawdust. Both the rooms (B and C) were prepared in this manner, and it was thought that any one entering them would necessarily leave footmarks in the sawdust, and would be obliged to break the seals, or cut the threads in order to disturb the beds.

<sup>1</sup>[In the original, Wednesday is called the 12th, and the following days are similarly incorrectly dated.—TRANSLATOR.]

: The inhabitants of Daimonopolis grew more and more excited,  
: and came from all directions to see the "haunted house," while  
: Mme. A—— informed every one that they had set traps to catch  
: the culprits, for she now gave out that the whole thing was the  
work of practical jokers.

When the evening came, the entire family slept in house No. 2. Everything remained undisturbed in No. 1.

On Thursday, the 12th, and Friday, the 13th, nothing unusual occurred, and on the Friday Mme. A—— cut the threads and swept up the sawdust, and Jean and his grandfather slept each in his own bed.

On Saturday, the 14th, nothing particular happened, but on Sunday, the 15th, Mme. A—— found that the two rooms were again upset. She remade the beds and put down fresh sawdust, and the rest of the day passed without incident.

On Monday, the 16th, after making the beds, she was careful to scatter sawdust on the floor, but during the morning, in spite of these precautions, everything was again upset. No footprints were to be seen, as the bed-clothes and mattresses had been dragged into the kitchen, taking up in their passage the sawdust strewn on the floor. On the same day a lock was put on the outer door of the kitchen.

On Tuesday, the 17th, they shut the watch-dog into the house, leaving the inner doors open, so that he might go about into all three rooms; the outer kitchen door was locked, and the key removed. The dog was an extremely savage one, and was usually kept chained up, as he barked at the slightest sound, and did not always recognise even his own masters. About an hour after he had been shut up, Mme. A—— saw the dog reappear, and called out in astonishment to her father-in-law that some one must have let him out. The grandfather hurried to the door, and found it locked. When he opened it and went in, he saw that everything in the two rooms had again been upset, while the dog had not barked at all, or they would have heard him.

On the same day they put sawdust down again in the rooms, and left the dog tied up in the garden; later on he was found at liberty, and the rooms had again been thrown into confusion.

In the course of the next few days a part of the arbour was destroyed, shutters were torn off, and a washtub and various articles of furniture were heaped up on the terrace, but no one ever witnessed the phenomena at the moment of their actual occurrence.

On Saturday, December 21st, toward half-past six in the morning, after M. A—— had gone to work, Mme. A——, while still in bed, heard a knocking, and called out to Jeanne, who slept with her sister in the next room, to ask if she heard it.

Jeanne said she did, and they heard *the raps* again several times, but could not make out whether they were on the door or on the window. The sounds alarmed them, and when they grew louder Mme. A—— rose to go in to her daughter. She had hardly entered the room when Jeanne began to cry, saying that her hair had just been cut off; in fact, she showed her mother the plait that had been cut off, but could not explain how it had been done, as she had felt nothing, and seen no one, nor had her little sister, aged eight, who was sleeping in the same room, seen any one cutting off her hair.

The plait was taken to a priest, to whom they told the story, inquiring if this were not a manifestation of some supernatural force. He, however, thought the proof of demoniacal agency insufficient, while it appears that Jean said laughingly on the following day that it was his mother who had cut off Jeanne's hair.

On the Saturday night all the family slept under the same roof, and on the Sunday morning (the 22nd) a series of raps were heard in different parts of the house, which ceased, however, as soon as they got up, and no one was to be seen outside.

The raps came again on Monday morning (the 23rd), and when M. and Mme. A—— set out to market, the little girl ran after them with her father's purse which she had just found in the vine. He was greatly astonished, as he had put the purse in his trousers-pocket the evening before, and had not been out since. He could not understand how it came to be in the vine; moreover, the sum of 4 fr. 50 c. which it had contained was missing.

On every one of the following days Jean's room and his grandfather's were upset; plants were torn up in the garden, and Jeanne and her small brother, aged six, saw a cupboard open and the linen come out of its own accord. Mme. A—— also was very cleverly robbed of her purse. She had gone to bed with it under her pillow, and just as she was getting up ascertained that it was still there. She got out of bed, looked for it under the pillow and found it gone. Jeanne had been in the room a moment before. Mme. A—— was very much annoyed, as the purse had contained 17 fr. When she went out, the purse was lying in front of the door, but with no money in it.

About this time, M. C——, a hairdresser, wrote to the principal editor of a paper in G  rolstein, called the "*Messager de l'occulte*," to ask for an explanation of these phenomena. His letter was dated from Daimonopolis, Jan. 3rd, 1902, and contained an account of what had taken place at the A——'s house, adding that a trap had been set by laying down sawdust, affixing seals, etc., and that while the rooms were in this state the abnormal occurrences had ceased, but had commenced directly the seals, etc., were removed. He stated that the three children, aged respectively 15, 5, and 4 years old, said they had seen a wardrobe open and its contents fall out at their feet, and that they had seen the plants in the garden being broken, but did not see any one doing it. Raps had been heard at night on the walls and on the furniture, and he had himself twice visited the house, and had seen, as had many other persons, the bed-clothes in the garden, the furniture upset, and the plants torn up.

The Editor replied in a letter, also published in the "*Messager de l'occulte*," ascribing the phenomena to the presence of some medium, mediums being, he asserted, a kind of human battery, generating a species of electricity: hence the noises, breakages, and various other phenomena. The letter concluded by advocating the piercing of the air with some pointed steel object, on the theory that the steel would act as a lightning conductor, and so put a stop to the phenomena.

M. C——, in replying, said that the A——'s already suspected their daughter Jeanne to be in some way connected with the phenomena, and he thought that her brother, aged six, must also be a medium, as each of them, when alone, had seen the phenomena taking place. He also recounted the incident of the glass of water (see below), and stated that some days before a fork, spoon and knife, and a nail, had been found in Jeanne's bed, and that the girl herself was growing thin, and losing her appetite.

Jeanne was, in fact, beginning to look ill, and Dr. E—— (the name is only withheld to avoid disclosing the name of the town in which these events actually took place), who saw her casually, advised her parents to send her to the hospital, adding that her removal would enable them to judge of her influence on the phenomena. After her admission to the hospital, an attempt was made to hypnotise her, but she resisted, and in the evening had an attack of hysteria, with hallucination, believing that she saw a skeleton in front of her. During the night she crawled

about on all fours under the beds of the ward, eventually returning to her own bed.

During her absence from home, nothing unusual occurred at the A——'s, but when on the eighth day she left the hospital and came home, the original phenomena immediately began again.

She now suffered from frequent attacks of hysteria, and Mme. A——, in hopes of finding a cure, went to consult a somnambulist.

The somnambulist declared without hesitation that Jeanne was persecuted by some one who had "bewitched" her, and said that she would show the girl who this person was. Jeanne was taken to see her, and the somnambulist gave her a glass of water on a white plate, and told her to look at the bottom of the glass.

Jeanne did so, but saw nothing. On being told to look again, she still saw only the white plate, but on a third trial, being asked if she did not see a figure, she said she seemed to see a head, and in answer to a further question, described it as that of an old woman, wrinkled, with decayed teeth and a snub-nose, and wearing a black bonnet. She was then asked if she would recognise her if she met her, and said "yes."

Her mother was anxious to see the old woman for herself, but when she looked, saw only the white plate. The somnambulist told them to repeat the experiment at midnight, when Jeanne would be able to describe the woman more clearly; at midnight, accordingly, she was again given a glass of water, when she saw the old woman very distinctly, and described her in detail, from her dirty skirt and apron, and black bodice striped with red, down to her rings, in one of which was a garnet.

After this there could no longer be any doubt but that they were persecuted by an old woman who wished the family ill; it only remained to discover who was the woman described by Jeanne, and this Mme. A—— was not long in doing. She recalled an old story which she had told her family more than once, of how her mother had suffered for a long time before her death, and how this prolonged agony, being thought unnatural by those about her, was looked upon as the work of some one desirous of revenge, who prevented the dying woman from drawing her last breath. A neighbour had told them that to discover who this person was, they should burn two vine-shoots in the form of a cross, with salt upon them, when she would shortly appear. This was done, and soon afterwards a friend of the sick woman, who had heard of her hopeless condition, came in to see her. But

on her approaching the bed and crossing herself, the patient had made a grimace, whereupon the family had seized the false friend and driven her, not without some ill-treatment, out of the house. The dying woman then immediately expired. Nothing further had since been heard of this woman, but she was still alive, and living in Daimonopolis, in the Rue de la Colline; might it not therefore be she who was now taking her revenge by causing these phenomena?

In order to find out, it was decided to question the rapping spirits. These raps were never heard in the daytime, nor during the night, but always in the early morning when every one was still in bed.

One morning, then, when the raps were heard on the partition separating Jeanne's room from her parents', while the family were all in bed, they entered into conversation with the spirit, and in answer to questions were informed that the only person against whom it bore a grudge was Jeanne, not on account of anything she had done, but for vengeance on behalf of an old woman living in the Rue de la Colline. They asked if by beating or killing her the phenomena would be put an end to. The answer to this was "no."

If they did nothing, would they cease? "Yes."

Would the money and other articles which had disappeared be returned? "No."

Numerous other questions were put, the raps in reply to all of which were struck close to the bed in which Jeanne slept.

Mme. A—— was now sure of their tormentor, but in order to discover whether she was the woman seen by Jeanne in the glass of water, she decided to show her to her daughter and see whether the latter would recognise her.

Accordingly they went together one day to the Rue de la Colline, where, amidst a group of women gossiping in the road, she saw the supposed enemy of the family, and called Jeanne's attention to the group.

The girl cried out in alarm that it was she, and on her mother's feigning ignorance and asking, "Who?" said that it was the old woman she had seen in the glass, and begged her to come away, as she was frightened. This was conclusive, and it only remained to discover what could be done against their tormentor.

New phenomena, in fact, were now added to the old ones. The grandfather, on going into his room one evening, found all



the candles alight, and a crown and several crosses made of dried grasses on his bed. A basket and various other articles disappeared, and some squares of flannel, with pins stuck through them, which had been placed on the mantelpiece, were subsequently found in holes in the garden-wall, but without the pins.

Jeanne, while sleeping with her mother, felt herself pricked in different parts of the body, and Mme. A—— found among the sheets pins, forks and nails, which nobody, she said, had put there.

It was now decided to put into practice the method suggested by the editor of the *Messenger de l'occulte* in his letter of Jan. 5th (*viz.* the use of pointed steel to draw off the electric currents generated by the medium), and this was done under the following circumstances.

One morning, Mme. A——, who was sleeping with Jeanne, felt the bed shaking under her. She made Jeanne get up, and remained in it alone to defy the spirits. The bed began to tremble more violently than before, and she accused the children of shaking it; they all denied it, however, and to make sure that no one was touching it, she sent for her father-in-law and had the bed put out in the middle of the room and surrounded by her family, while the grandfather, armed with a sword-stick, stood ready to carry out the editor's instructions.

As the bed now ceased to shake, Mme. A—— deemed herself victorious, and began to defy and abuse the spirits in the most vigorous language; the bed was then violently agitated, and the grandfather cut and thrust with his sword in all directions, round and even under it.

He stopped at length, exhausted, and they anxiously awaited the result, but the bed still shook, and Mme. A—— got up, much discouraged by the failure of the experiment.

As all their troubles were occasioned by the old woman in the Rue de la Colline, the best course now seemed to come to some understanding with her; but as Mme. A—— was unwilling to seek her in her own house, she consulted the somnambulist as to the possibility of inducing her to come to theirs. This, she was assured, was quite simple; they had only to shut themselves up in the house and burn a cat alive on the hearth towards eleven o'clock at night; but whatever happened, under no pretext whatsoever was any one to leave the house, nor was it necessary to leave a door open, as she knew perfectly well how to come in without that.

When the evening came, M. A—— informed one of his friends, and they shut themselves up, and towards eleven o'clock burned the cat. At that moment a loud noise, like a clap of thunder, was heard outside, but despite their astonishment they followed the somnambulist's advice, and no one left the house. Loud knocks were heard on the door and on the partition, and they were awaiting the appearance of the old woman, when Jeanne, who was in bed, uttered a loud cry. She had a feeling of strangulation, screamed and struggled violently, and was evidently suffering from an attack of hysteria. Her parents, who saw her for the first time in this state, were greatly alarmed and feared for her life. The doctor who was called in advised their sending her to the hospital at Montpellier, which they did, in spite of the distance, and she was admitted on February 20th, 1902.

[A brief account of Jeanne's condition since her admission to the hospital is here given, of which the following is the substance]:

Between February 20th and March 18th the patient had three violent hysterical attacks. These attacks lasted from 10 to 20 minutes, and were accompanied by a sensation of strangulation, when the breathing was suspended, the face congested, and the eyes convulsed. Clonic convulsions followed, with loud outcries, and at this stage the patient became cataleptic, retained any attitude in which she was put, and was completely insensible. The loss of consciousness was absolute. She also had slighter attacks, accompanied by convulsive movements, but without loss of consciousness. She had no hallucinations since entering the hospital. As regards the sensory condition, there was conjunctival and pharyngeal anaesthesia, and also variable and transitory anaesthesiae of many other parts of the body; three different examinations all giving different results.

In each of the examinations the anaesthetic parts were insensible to touch, to temperature and to pain; but notwithstanding the complete anaesthesia of the left hand, the patient was able to distinguish the forms of objects, and to recognise them. With her eyes closed she knows when her legs are stretched out or brought near together, but if they are crossed one above the other she invariably makes a mistake, and asserts without hesitation that the left is over the right, when the right is over the left, or *vice versa*; and if, when her eyes are closed and her legs crossed, one of her feet is pricked, she localises the prick in the other foot.

With regard to sight, there was restriction of the visual field of both eyes. For colours the sight of the left eye was normal,

but there was dyschromatopsia of the [right eye; she saw red violet. Her hearing was normal; motility, normal except during the crises; and reflexes, normal.

Her intelligence was normal; her moral sense, very weak. She stole money and various articles from her companions, and was extremely untruthful, inventing all manner of scandalous stories of which she herself was the heroine.

She amused herself at first by rapping on her table during the night, to induce a belief in the presence of spirits, and asked the nurse if she did not hear the raps.

She was put under a tonic régime, with treatment by electricity, etc. At the present time she no longer has attacks, is much improved in health, and her character has changed for the better.

The first impression produced by this long and curious story is that there was obviously a mixture of fraud, hysteria, and credulity.

The fraud, to begin with, is evident. We have seen the interest which these good people naturally had in preventing the house from being sold or let, and that no serious attempt was ever made to guard against practical joking. There were either no locks on the doors, or they were found torn off when the phenomena occurred. A savage dog was shut into the house, and was found at large without his having barked. Evidently the door had been opened and that by one of the household. When the precaution of using threads and seals was taken, nothing happened. When sawdust was put down, the spirit swept it up with the mattresses so that no footprints might be seen.

Granted the fraud, then, who were its authors? It is hardly to be supposed that the entire family were implicated; the younger children probably were not, nor the grandfather.

It is clear that Jeanne was the principal figure in the affair. Her morals were detestable, as was proved at the hospital by the phenomena of rapping, purse-stealing, etc.; here, however, she was obliged to confess to fraud.

Whether she had accomplices or not it is difficult to say. Mme. A——'s account is very clear, very detailed, and neither dates nor facts are omitted, but this is not conclusive. Moreover, it is sufficient for our purpose to have established the fact that there *was* fraud, and that Jeanne, with or without assistance, was its chief perpetrator.

But was the affair all fraud? Certainly not. Jeanne's hysteria was undoubtedly genuine, the attacks, hysterogenetic zones, etc., were typical. One peculiarity of the tactile anaesthesia of both hands may be noted, that while they were insensible to the sharpest pricks, she was yet able to recognise, with her eyes closed, a brooch put into her hand, and to fasten it very deftly into her bodice, also to take down and put up her hair, etc.

The allochirical error which induced her to localise in the left foot the sensations of the right when her legs are crossed, is even more curious, and very characteristic of hysteria.

It is possible also that some of the raps and movements of objects were not fraudulent, especially the raps which replied to the questions about the old woman. Ochorowicz has said that fraud is inseparable from mediumism as simulation is inseparable from hypnotism, but that science ought to study both. Some of Jeanne's séances may come under the head of unconscious fraud, notably the one in which, after burning the cat, they awaited the arrival of the old woman. They were all in a state of strained expectation; she rapped as the thunder rolled, and the scene ended in loud cries and a violent attack of hysteria. The raps in this case were probably produced involuntarily, and it is these unconscious frauds that stand out from the deliberate trickery and are deserving of study.

The vision in the glass of water was also probably a genuine case of crystal vision.

If we now come to consider the psychological environment of the case, we find that the children of eight and six years old said that they had seen the wardrobe open and the linen come out, the plants torn up, etc. Now, it is a matter of common knowledge how little childish testimony is to be trusted. No doubt they saw the clothes on the ground and the devastation in the garden, and by dint of constant discussion on the subject ended by thinking they had actually seen the transport of the linen and other objects.

Next comes the grandfather, with his hypothesis of spirit-intervention ready to hand upon the first appearance of the phenomena, and the pseudo-scientific barber, who reads the *Messager de l'occulte* and knows that nowadays all these things are amenable to scientific methods. He understands the theory of the sword-points, and knows that it is a truly scientific remedy and not one of the old wives fables that held currency in the earlier centuries.

Beyond all these there remains the crowd,—the credulous, sheep-like

crowd,—brought together by curiosity, whose one idea is that there must be an author of the mischief, and that he must be punished. Well was it for the old woman they accused that the burning of a cat sufficed them. Had the remedy been her own death, there would have been five hundred arms ready in an instant to fling her into the canal. Yet not one of these persons, left to his own devices, would so much as have harmed a fly. It was the gregarious instinct exciting them, and the gregarious spirit is both puerile and brutal. Such is the psychology of the crowd

## II.

## REVIEWS.

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*Hypnotism: its History, Practice, and Theory.* By J. MILNE BRAMWELL, M.B., C.M. (London: Grant Richards. 1903. 8vo., pp. 478. Price 18s. net.)

This is a remarkable book—remarkable not only for what it says, but even more for what it abstains from saying. Dr. Bramwell is best known perhaps as a distinguished practitioner, who has had no small share in raising hypnotism to the recognised and almost orthodox position which, after many decades of calumny, is now accorded to it by the medical profession in Great Britain. This alone would entitle him to our attention. But he is more than this; he is an active and acute enquirer. He has made himself the historian of hypnotism, and has been the first to bring fully to light the splendid work of his countryman and predecessor, James Braid; work which had been too long ignored, and must now take its place among the most original and illuminating contributions of Great Britain to mental and medical science. And he is beside a keen and trenchant psychologist—not merely a critic of the theories of others, but the author of a remarkable series of experiments which have done much to throw fresh light on the theory of his craft. And yet, after many years of practice, of research, and reflection, he ends with a confession of ignorance; he leaves us face to face with a mystery; he has no theory to give us of the means by which he attains his ends, or of the physiological or psychical processes which they involve.

This attitude is at first sight perhaps rather disappointing; but it is no small gain that the question should at length, and perhaps for the first time in its history, be removed from the heated atmosphere of rash assertion, blind prejudice, and more than theological persecu-

tion in which it has passed its stormy and none too healthy infancy. It is one of the hardest of scientific lessons to learn to state mere facts uncoloured by preconceived ideas, and it is at least a proof of courage that Dr. Bramwell, in spite of all temptations, should have held fast to this attitude of detachment. He practically demolishes all previous theories, and allows us to start fresh with a *tabula rasa*; we can turn our backs on the errors of the past, and cultivate that coolness which may help us to build something more or less enduring.

Bramwell deals, as his title tells us, with the history, practice, and theory of hypnotism. Of these three, the first is briefly treated in a single chapter and an Appendix; but these are of great interest, both from the account they give of the "scientific," or rather professional, persecution to which Elliotson was subjected, and of the later and little known researches of Braid. One would gladly let the moral tortures of the medical "Holy Office," as administered to Elliotson, and in some degree to Esdaile, fall into oblivion, were it not that the spirit which prompted them is still notoriously in existence. It would be a comfort to think that blind intolerance and absolute refusal to investigate may be a necessary test for the purging of false doctrine; but it is hard to believe that any help was given to the cause of truth by Elliotson's professional ruin, or that the delay of some forty years in the acceptance of so much of his doctrines as has proved true can be a gain to science, outweighing both the suffering which might have been saved to patients and the undoubted moral harm done by a perverse refusal to face unfamiliar facts. The action of the British Medical Association in referring back the report of its own very strong Committee so recently as 1892 shows that the spirit of professional obscurantism dies hard, even in the temples of science. As for Braid, though he was not tabooed as his two contemporaries were, he was ignored till his discoveries were made over again across the Channel. However, he may be content to share the fate of Newton, who, as we now know from his unpublished papers, anticipated many consequences of his theories, which were loudly proclaimed as new and brilliant discoveries by the Epigoni of mathematical astronomy. Bramwell has shown that the most advanced theories of the famous Nancy workers are often to be found not merely in embryo, but often in a fuller and more satisfactory form, in Braid's latest work, some of which remains still in MS.

About half of the book, pages 41 to 272, deals with practical

hypnotism, with a series of successful cases, mostly from Bramwell's own practice, illustrating the great therapeutic value of the method. With these we need not here deal, as they are largely of a technical character, and do not produce much novelty. Dr. Bramwell is, however, particularly to be congratulated on the success with which he has tackled nervous cases on the borderland, if not actually in the domain, of insanity—cases which, from previous experience, might have been supposed absolutely refractory. It will be found, too, that there is no ground whatever for the idea which at one time found supporters of a superior susceptibility of the Latin race to suggestive treatment. Dr. Bramwell's figures on this head are most interesting. Attention may particularly be called to the marked difference he found between the susceptibility of the patients from his general practice at Goole, where he failed to affect only two out of 500 cases, and those which came to him as a consulting specialist. Of the first 100 cases of the latter, no less than 22 proved refractory. This is, of course, due to the fact that this latter group were almost always difficult nervous cases only brought to him in advanced stages, where ordinary therapeutic means had already failed.

But to Psychical Researchers it is Bramwell's long and important chapter xii. which will have the most immediate interest, and with this we now propose to deal. The two questions discussed in it are vital; what is the nature, the *differentia*, of the hypnotic state? And what is the mechanism by which this state can be artificially induced?

We can put aside at once the earlier transcendental answers, and the rash theories of magnetic and odylic force; a sufficient answer to them has been long since found. The theories which have of late years been current have mostly supposed that the hypnotic state means an inhibition of normal faculties, produced either by physical stimulation (Heidenhain) or by partial mental fatigue or concentration. The typical state has been taken to be one of somnolence, and it is on this assumption that the very name of hypnotism was invented by Braid, though, as Bramwell shows, he subsequently gave up both the assumption and the name, for which he substituted Monoideism. Braid had, in fact, made the important observation, which has only been slowly rediscovered, that somnolence is only an unessential and subsidiary symptom of what, for the sake of convenience, we must still call the hypnotic condition. The essential phenomena can in fact be produced without exception in a



state which is one of alertness, or at all events involves neither unconsciousness nor amnesia. Thus the problem of the difference between hypnotic and ordinary sleep loses the importance which was once attached to it, and becomes only part of a larger question.

What, then, in Bramwell's opinion is the nature of the "hypnotic" state? He gives no formal answer to this question. He speaks indeed of the normal and hypnotic states as "practically identical" (p. 333), though immediately correcting this by admitting the increased suggestibility of the hypnotic subject. But on the negative side he brings all his arguments, and much fresh material, against the idea of automatism. The subject is not the mere tool of the operator. The willingness of the subject to accept and carry out suggestion is limited (p. 337) by the important condition that the suggestion must not be "criminal or improper." It would also appear that it must not be disagreeable—a vague and further reaching word. It would seem, therefore, though I do not find any absolute definition, that Bramwell regards the hypnotic state as one of increased obedience to neutral suggestions, *i.e.* to those which in the normal state would not be regarded as either disagreeable or wrong. It might seem, indeed, that this hardly covers the obedience which is shown, let us say, in public exhibitions. One would not *a priori* have supposed that the ordinary undergraduate in his normal state would consent to chew a tallow candle under the idea that it was sugar candy, or nurse a handkerchief among the derisive cheers of his friends when told that it was a baby. Bramwell would, I gather, include such displays among those which afford us the pleasure of "showing off our various gifts and attainments" (p. 327), though the undergraduate, if proud of his capacity of feeding a handkerchief from an imaginary pap-bottle, would appear in ordinary life laudably anxious to deny himself the public gratification of this particular vanity. In fact, I cannot help thinking that Bramwell is inclined to minimise the increased suggestibility of hypnosis. Even, however, if this be so, he makes it very clear that the Nancy practitioners have on the other hand enormously exaggerated the possibilities of induced "automatism." We may well admit on the one hand that the boundary of acts which the subject regards as neutral can be shifted in the automatic state so as to include many which in ordinary life would be considered disagreeable, without impairing the power of resistance to those which involve an absolute offence to the moral nature. And by his resolute insistence upon the retention of this power, Bramwell has

rendered an immense service to students of the subject. He speaks with the authority of enormous experience when he tells us that, so far as he has seen, improper suggestions are invariably rejected; and he can justly appeal to the fact that, after all the years in which hypnotism has been a matter of public marvel and ignorant exaggeration, there has not been found a single proved case of crime effected by means of it. This conclusion is one of the most solid results of his book.

One word more on this question of suggestion. Bramwell hardly treats with sufficient seriousness some of Bernheim's arguments, notably the purely psychological theorem that "an idea has a tendency to generate its actuality." He argues that, on the contrary (1) "A suggested idea has generally a tendency to generate nothing. (2) A suggested idea has frequently a tendency to generate its opposite. (3) A suggested idea rarely tends to generate its actuality." But the arguments he adduces in favour of this wholesale negation are really hardly worthy of the book. For (1) he only urges that "a very casual glance at the events of everyday life would compel us to conclude that this class is the commonest of the three. This is evident if we think of the numberless things ineffectually suggested in the family circle to domestics, workmen, tradespeople, friends, acquaintances, etc." (p. 331). This is, of course, only chaff; but it hardly seems to be in place. It is true that the butcher may bring a rump-steak when the cook has "suggested" a mutton-chop; but it is only in her least scientific moments that the housewife would venture to say that the order to bring the chop produced "no result" in a majority of cases. So, too, as an instance where suggestion produces a result opposite to that intended, Bramwell instances the thief who only runs away the faster when told to stop. But, of course, neither Bernheim nor any one else has asserted that suggestion always produces the effect intended, and it is illogical to argue that because the effect has not been produced, there has been no tendency to produce it. Obviously in the case of the thief the tendency is counteracted by other motives; but if Bramwell were to say "Stop" to 20 passers-by in Piccadilly, it is highly probable that 19 of them would give a momentary obedience. Indeed, no better witness to the truth of the theorem impugned is needed than Bramwell himself. He is accustomed to make to patients in the normal state a particular suggestion, that of rest. He tells us that in from 75 to 100 per cent. of his cases the idea generates its

actuality, and (p. 333) that "the tendency must be in favour of the results, which are numerically the greater of the two." In fact, if he denies the fundamental proposition that an idea tends to generate its actuality, it is hard to see what meaning is left to the word "suggestion" at all, or why any one should ever take the trouble to suggest anything, either in ordinary life or medical practice.

But leaving persiflage aside, with this protest, we come to the serious and solid conclusion, which may now be regarded as established, that so far as suggestibility is concerned there is no great difference between the normal and hypnotic states; that the difference lies in the temporary removal of motives tending to counteract the suggestion; and finally, that this removal does not imply any inhibition of faculty. Here Bramwell is really in serious conflict with the Nancy observers; he boldly asserts that there is not only no inhibition, but an actual extension, or perhaps we should rather say a liberation, of faculty. This is the position which constitutes the second notable point in the book. It is, of course, not novel. It means that Bramwell accepts, at least in large measure, Myers's theory of the subliminal self. Though he does not regard this theory as a complete explanation of the facts, he holds that it is the nearest approach to one that has yet been made. This is the more noteworthy because he is distinctly sceptical as to the existence of any transcendental powers in the subliminal self. He has, for instance, come to the conclusion that there is no sufficient evidence for telepathy. It is hardly fair to enter into an argument with him here on what is merely an *obiter dictum*, nor can we admit that the experiments of Gurney and others can be dismissed as founded on errors of observation. But it is just as well that we should have the testimony of so impartial and sceptical an observer to the importance of Myers's general theory, even when stripped of that on which the theory is commonly supposed to rest entirely. What Bramwell does hold is that the hypnotic state shows just such extension of faculty as Myers postulates for the subliminal self. Bramwell has himself added much to our knowledge of this extended faculty by his remarkable series of experiments on time appreciation, where orders were carried out at the expiration of such periods as 20,290 minutes from the giving of the order—periods which in her normal state his subject was incapable of correctly calculating, and even in the hypnotic could reduce to days and hours only with errors. Strange to say, even when she made

an error in the former calculation, the order was none the less carried out at the expiration of the correct period. From this Bramwell draws the conclusion, inevitable as it would seem, that below the stratum of consciousness brought to the surface by hypnotism, there is a "sub-subliminal" stratum intellectually more capable than either of the two above it. But he only admits this with great reserve. He includes it among the theories which cannot be considered satisfactory (p. 418), and still maintains a purely negative attitude with regard to any general explanation of hypnotic phenomena. Of course such a suspension of judgment is from the strictly scientific point of view unassailable; but it has the disadvantage of not giving any assistance in the further investigation, and one cannot but be somewhat disappointed at it.

After a careful study of the book, I feel that it has produced more definite conclusions in my own mind than in its author's. Perhaps I may be permitted to sketch these. We will take the question on p. 416 to which Bramwell says that "no reasonable answer has yet been given." *What is the connexion between hypnotic methods and the production of hypnotic phenomena?* "Personally," says Bramwell, "I can see no logical connexion between the acts of fixed gazing, of concentration of attention, or of suggested ideas of drowsy states, and the wide and varied phenomena of hypnosis." But all the hypnotic methods have one thing in common, the diversion of attention from the insistency of external surroundings; and in Bramwell's own belief—and I agree with him—the hypnotic state has one broad characteristic, the working of a subliminal consciousness in directions unusual in ordinary life. Surely there is a logical connexion between the two; it is reasonable to suppose that the subliminal self may require, with the help of the suggesting operator, to shake off the urgent claims of conscious life, before it can devote itself to the hidden processes of the unconscious.

Suggestion seems in fact to be throughout of the nature of good advice which the unconscious self is very glad to take. The operator's first advice, in whatever form it is given, comes to this, "Be abstracted; do not think of what is outside you." Then follow the positive suggestions, "Think of your malady, and see if you cannot make things work right," or whatever they may be. One effect of abstraction, even when it is not the result of external suggestion, is to produce indifference to some matters which in ordinary life seem important, *e.g.* the fear of ridicule. The abstracted philosopher may do things publicly as absurd as the undergraduate on the platform;

and public exhibitions do not as a rule rise above the display of this particular quality of abstraction. We are certainly not justified by anything that we know in supposing that mere abstraction will produce indifference to deeply seated feelings, such for instance as a woman's modesty; and in fact Bramwell brings very strong evidence to show that it does not. All that suggestion does is to set the unconscious but very rational self working on fresh lines. It is capable of judging if the advice which the operator is giving is good or otherwise, and of selecting the good. It has in fact a fresh purview of life, part of which is for the conscious self only obscured by the light of common day, and for that very reason when revealed seems supernatural. Bramwell is no doubt right in objecting to Braid's later term "Monoideism," on the ground that the hypnotised subject has a wide range of ideas. A better and not much uglier name would be Heteroideism. The mind is concentrated not on one idea, but on a whole field of ideas which are not those of common life. Braid, in fact, if he did not, as in so many things he did, quite hit the mark, was very near it. All seems to point to the theory that the mind has only a limited amount of attention to dispose of, but has much freedom as to the direction of this attention. Hypnotism means the direction of attention upon a region chosen by the mind itself, under the influence of external suggestion. How the suggestion acts is of course a master-problem, which we are not yet in a position to answer; how one mind can influence another at all is at least as dark as the sister question how the mind can influence the body. When we can answer it we "shall know what God and man is." But Bramwell's contribution to the knowledge of Self seems to me invaluable, mainly because it puts aside all the mechanical theories which have hitherto held the field in fashionable science, and leaves us no choice but to turn to a view which strengthens the moral significance of the hidden workings of the mind, and deepens our sense at once of individual responsibility and mutual influence.

The diversion of the attention of the self to the operations of the subliminal region, though it does not explain the power of time-appreciation, does something to render it less marvellous. I have myself often noticed, during a long and monotonous tramp, how my own sense of time was heightened, so that before taking out my watch I have been able to tell almost to a minute where the hands would be. As to the mechanism by which this was done, I have not the least idea; but it is obvious that the rhythmical pacing gives an approximate standard of measurement which was entirely absent

in the case of Dr. Bramwell's subject. The accuracy of her calculations therefore still remains astounding, though only greater in degree than our normal powers. It is noticeable that her ability seems to have been capable of improvement by training, again offering an analogy to the operations of conscious life. It is possible to train oneself, as most photographers know, to a very fair appreciation of short periods of time, say from 5 to 10 seconds. If I may again refer to my own experience, I find that I can do this by repeating monotonously the words "rickety dickety dick," which take exactly one second for clear enunciation. The muscles, if rhythmically moved, soon acquire the right pace, and will keep it up with reasonable uniformity for a short time, if the attention is directed to them. Another possible standard is that of the heart-beats; but it must be confessed that there is a difficulty in imagining any subject so steady of nerve and so uniform in health that these would serve for a time-piece over periods of several days. In short, Bramwell's time experiments seem likely to afford a puzzle which it will take much more knowledge and experiment to solve, even roughly. Here again he has made a solid and most suggestive contribution to science.

Finally, one word may be added to what Bramwell has said about the supposed dangers of hypnotism. While fully and gladly accepting what he says about the impossibility of imposing criminal or dishonourable actions upon an unwilling subject, I am inclined to think that there is a more subtle risk which must not be quite left out of sight. This arises from the way in which hypnotism has been made the object of popular discussion. Few patients, probably, come before a medical hypnotist without strong preconceived and wholly erroneous ideas as to the nature of the process. A large number of them will include among these the belief that there is something uncanny in the method, and in particular that the operator gains something in the nature of a mystical influence. If the prejudice against the treatment is overcome, this belief is still very apt to remain, and it is so closely analogous to the deeper instincts to which we have already referred, that it is, as I have had occasion to observe, extremely difficult to uproot, even with all the precautions taken by Bramwell himself. And the belief, however unfounded, that such an influence exists, is in itself the possible source, not perhaps of real danger, but of a state of mind which is at least very undesirable in a nervous patient. This is a serious obstacle in the way of all hypnotic practice, and one hardly sees how it is to be entirely

removed save by the slow and patient education of public opinion, both professional and lay. The average medical man, no less than the average patient, needs to have the whole subject stripped of the supernatural and abnormal, and put before him in the driest light of dispassionate science; and perhaps, for the benefit of sufferers at least, Bramwell's chief service is that he should so resolutely have struck out of his book anything that has the least savour of the uncanny or abnormal or sensational, and given us a treatise which offers little for the paragraphist of the halfpenny press, but infinite interest, not only to the scientific thinker, but to every one who desires to know more of the workings of that extraordinary complex which we call Self.

WALTER LEAF.

*Les Phénomènes Psychiques : Recherches, Observations, Méthodes*, Par le Dr. J. MAXWELL. Préface du Professeur CH. RICHT. (Félix Alcan, Bibliothèque de Philosophie contemporaine. Paris, 1904. 1 vol., 8vo. 5 fr.)

The chief obstacle to the establishment of any kind of recognised scientific basis for the class of phenomena known as psychic is of course to be found in the universal disinclination which exists to accept, as of any cogency towards the formation of one's own opinion regarding these phenomena, the experience of another observer, however well accredited and competent. While we are probably all personally conscious of this tendency, it is not very easy to account for it. In other branches of science it is but necessary to announce some new discovery for it to be accepted, without undue surprise, by the uncritical public, however greatly it may transcend their own personal experience; and a failure to regard even the wildest hypothesis concerning it as a possible contribution to truth is held a mark of a very lamentable lack of intellectual elasticity. But in psychic phenomena the observations of the very same individual whose opinions in any other sphere would be received with universal respect, are dismissed as unworthy of serious attention, and the only emotion aroused is one of general regret that another good man should have gone wrong. Against this attitude Professor Richet, in his preface to the remarkable book before me, makes strong appeal. "My advice to the reader," he says, "may be summed up in a few words. This is a book to be approached without prejudices, fearing neither that which is new nor that which is unforeseen. In other words, while preserving the most scrupulous respect for the science

of to-day, one should be thoroughly convinced that such science, whatever measure of truth it may contain, is nevertheless terribly incomplete. Those imprudent spirits who occupy themselves with the 'occult' sciences are accused of overthrowing Science, and of destroying the laborious edifice raised by thousands of toilers, at the cost of immense labour, during the last three or four centuries. This reproach seems to me quite unjust. No one is able to destroy a scientific fact. . . . If, as appears more and more likely, those facts which are called occult come to be established, one need in no way disturb oneself as to the fate of classical science. Unknown or new facts, however strange, are not going to destroy the truth of old ones. To take an example from M. Maxwell's work, suppose we admit that the phenomenon of 'raps'—that is to say, audible vibrations in wood or other substances—is a real phenomenon, and that in certain cases there may be blows which no mechanical force known to us can explain, would the science of physics be overthrown? It would indeed be a new force exercised on matter, but the old forces would none the less preserve their activity, and it is even likely that the transmission of vibrations by means of this new force would follow the same laws as other vibrations, and that temperature, pressure, and the density of the air or of the wood might continue to exercise their usual influence. Is there a single man of science worthy of the name who can affirm that there are no forces, hitherto unknown, at work in the world? Just in the same way that science is unconquerable when it establishes facts, so is it miserably subject to error when it seeks to establish negations. . . . Thus it becomes a true scientist to be at once very modest and very bold; very modest, for our science is but a little thing; very bold, for the vast regions of the worlds unknown lie open before him. Audacity and prudence; these are indeed the two qualities, in no wise contradictory, of M. Maxwell's book. Whatever be the fate in store for the ideas which he bases upon his facts, one may rest assured that the facts, which have been well observed by him, will remain. I conceive that in these are to be found, however inchoate as yet the sketch may be, the lineaments of a new science."

Professor Richet is indeed an optimist if he means by these words to express his belief that facts of this character, however temperately stated, however carefully observed, will be accepted by the scientific world, or by any considerable section of the public, in the spirit of open-mindedness which he claims as their due. M. Maxwell himself is under no delusions on the subject. He says (p. 293),



"My judgment will convince no one; in such matters as this one must see for oneself before one will be convinced." And yet if there was a book which, by reason of the competency and general claim to credibility of its author, his scientific status and his intellectual capacity, should merit the attention of even the most prejudiced critic, it is, I venture to think, the work under consideration. M. Maxwell began his investigations wholly unbiassed in favour of the phenomena which form the subject of them. "I had always," he says (p. 14) "considered them as unworthy of any examination," and it was apparently merely his wish to study the reasons for the prevalence of the mystical movement in modern times which at first directed his attention to the matter. Opportunities for experiment soon offered themselves and, astonished at the issue of certain of these experiments, he engaged in a series extending over the last nine or ten years, the results of which he now lays before the public. M. Maxwell early determined upon the subjects most suitable for experimental observation, and the conditions under which alone he would consider evidence as meriting serious attention. The phenomena open to research may be divided into two classes, material and intellectual. Under 'material and physical phenomena' are comprised (1) raps; (2) movements of objects (*a*) without contact or (*b*) only with such contact as is insufficient to effect the particular movement in question; (3) *apports*, *i.e.* the production of objects by some supernormal agency; (4) visual phenomena, *i.e.* the appearance of lights and of forms, luminous or otherwise, including among the latter the class of alleged phenomena known as materialisations; and (5) phenomena leaving some permanent trace, such as imprints or 'direct' writings or drawings, etc. Under the class of 'intellectual phenomena' may be included such occurrences as automatic writing, table tilting, *i.e.* messages produced by the tilting of a table *with* contact, telepathy, clairvoyance of past, distant, or future events, etc. This enumeration, I should perhaps say, does not strictly coincide with M. Maxwell's, whose classification appears to me, I confess, somewhat arbitrary. Although the first class of phenomena are of rarer alleged occurrence than the second, M. Maxwell decided that they were susceptible of more exact investigation, and to them accordingly he has mainly directed his researches. As to conditions, he has acted rigorously on the principle that no conditions can be regarded as satisfactory where there is not sufficient light adequately to control the experiments, and that no phenomena occurring in

the absence of this primary requisite, no matter how perfect the control may in other respects seem to be, ought to count towards the formation of his judgment or be quoted in support of his conclusions. Acting upon this rule, he has almost invariably insisted on conducting the experiments in the light, sometimes broad daylight, sometimes daylight tempered by Venetian blinds or otherwise, and sometimes lamp-light. It is true that in the case of luminous phenomena an exception had to be made, such phenomena being only visible in the dark. Under these conditions, then, he has arrived at certain definite conclusions, conclusions which he announces as being in his own opinion absolutely beyond controversy. He states (p. 23) that he has attested, in a manner which appears to him certain, the phenomena of 'raps,' of the movement of objects both without any form of contact whatever and with contact of a kind insufficient to effect the particular movement, and also certain luminous phenomena. In discussing the value of his conclusions, M. Maxwell says (p. 26), "I have to defend myself against only two enemies, the fraud of others and my own illusions. I am convinced that I have not been the victim either of the one or the other. When, for example, I have observed in broad daylight the moving of a piece of furniture in a café, a restaurant, or railway refreshment room, I have certainly the right to believe that I am not in the presence of an apparatus got up for the purpose of producing such effects. When the unforeseen character of the experiment excludes the hypothesis of preparation, and when the absence of any contact between the experimenters and the object moved is manifest both to sight and touch, I have sufficient reason for excluding the hypothesis of fraud. When I measure the distance between the objects, both before and after the displacement, I have also sufficient reason for excluding in its turn the hypothesis of the illusion of my senses. If I am refused this right, I ask how indeed is it then possible to observe any fact whatever? No one is more convinced than myself of the frailty of our impressions and the relativity of our perceptions; nevertheless, there must be some way of perceiving a phenomenon in order to present it to impartial observation. The objection which I have supposed cannot indeed be made in any universal manner, for to admit its validity would be to remove any foundation for our sciences. It can only be made to me in my particular capacity, and I admit very willingly that it is impossible for me to exculpate myself. I might vainly plead that I am persuaded of the regularity of my perceptions, vainly assert that I discover in

myself no tendency to illusions, and my testimony will remain none the less suspected. I have only one defence to make against those who mistrust my qualifications as an observer, and that is to invite them to take the trouble of experimenting on their own account, and to employ the same method as myself. . . . If I am unable solemnly to affirm the reality of the phenomena observed by me, I can at all events affirm my personal conviction of their existence. Perhaps in thus affirming only my subjective conviction and in not venturing to assert with a like energy the objective reality of the things which I have attested, I am showing an exaggerated distrust of myself. I hope at all events that no one will blame me for my prudent reserve. Who is there among men who can assert that he has not been deceived? But in any case I cannot admit the right of any one to criticise my observations without his having put himself in the conditions which have enabled me to make them. Nothing could be more unreasonable than an attitude of this kind, and I cannot recognise the competency of judges who will decide without preliminary information. For the rest, I am not concerned with converting any one to my views, and I remain indifferent—respectfully indifferent if you will—to the judgment which may be formed about me.” I have quoted M. Maxwell thus at some length in support of Professor Richet’s claim that audacity joined with prudence are the marks of his work.

I will now proceed to consider some of the actual occurrences which have led M. Maxwell to his conclusions. Let me say here that unquestionably in his manner of reporting them M. Maxwell lays himself open to the criticism that in but few cases does he give such details of the conditions as would be sufficient to enable a reader to form his own judgment as to their adequacy. It is true that in abstaining from furnishing a complete account of the details in the form of a *procès-verbal* M. Maxwell says he acts advisedly, on the ground that it is absolutely impossible in fact to give such an exhaustive statement of the conditions as would suffice to bring conviction to any non-observer, and he points out that, notwithstanding the laboriously detailed reports of the Piper phenomena, they yet have not resulted in convincing every reader, though in the opinion of the author, Dr. Hodgson, they ought to furnish irrefragable proof of a spiritistic origin. However full the report, the imagination of a subsequent critic will see in the omission to state some particular precaution endless sources of error, which actual observers will nevertheless know not to have been present. As a reviewer, I am indeed

grateful to M. Maxwell for his abstention from any such portentous undertaking, for his book might, as literature, have become absolutely unreadable; as a critic, I cannot but express a regret that he has not, in at least one or two cases, given us specimens of the exact order and circumstances of his experiments. As he has not done this, I am spared the task of attempting to criticise the experiments themselves, in the manner in which Dr. Hodgson so laboriously criticised Dr. Oliver Lodge's report of the Eusapia sittings at the Ile Roubaud. The value of the experiments must depend wholly on the estimate which each reader will form of the capacity of the observer. It is, however, fair to ask objectors who will refuse even to consider (I do not say be convinced by) evidence such as this, what would be their attitude if confronted by a *procès-verbal* of such elaborate completeness as to be found proof against even the most ingenious criticism, a *procès-verbal* which, if true, must inevitably establish the existence of some hitherto unrecognised force of a supernatural character. I think that, if candid, 99 out of 100 such critics would admit that they would say that the *procès-verbal* was probably not true, while the remaining one would put it from his mind and forget about it as soon as possible. M. Maxwell, therefore, will probably not lose many converts by his failure to provide a target for the shafts of his opponents. Let me pass, then, to a few of the experiments themselves, and seek to give some account of them in, as far as possible, the author's own words.

(1) Raps (p. 67 and *seq.*). "As a rule, raps appear to resound on the top of a table, but this is not always the case. They are often heard on the ground, on the sitters, or on the furniture, walls, or ceiling. I have only heard authentic raps on the table, the ground, the walls, and on furniture in the neighbourhood of the medium; and I have often heard them outside regular séances. . . . I have heard them so frequently in the brightest light that I doubt whether darkness is so favourable to their production as it is to certain other phenomena. . . . Contact of the hands is not necessary for their production. If one has succeeded in obtaining them with contact, one of the surest ways of doing so without contact is to let the hands rest for a certain time on the table, and then to raise them very slowly, palms downwards, and the fingers loosely extended. It is rare that under these conditions the raps do not continue to be heard for at least a certain time. . . . With certain mediums the energy liberated is great enough to act at a distance; and I have heard raps sound on a table about two yards away from the

medium. With a certain [non-professional] medium I have obtained raps in restaurants and in railway refreshment rooms, and it suffices to have experienced the raps produced by this medium under the conditions indicated to be convinced of their reality. The unusual noise of the raps attracted the attention of persons present, and greatly embarrassed us. The results surpassed our expectations, and the more we were confused by the noise of our raps, the more were the latter multiplied, as though they were being produced by some teasing creature which was amusing itself at our expense. . . . More rarely I have heard raps produced on stuffs, either on the persons of the medium or of sitters, or else on furniture. I have heard them on pieces of paper placed on the séance table, or on books, the walls, tambourines, and small wooden objects. . . . The variety in the character of the raps is not less than that of the objects on which they sound, . . . and their tonality varies according to the object. It is easy to distinguish between raps sounding on wood, paper, and stuff. . . . The sound of an ordinary rap, on a table, is rather like that of an electric spark, . . . but the type varies greatly, . . . and the sound, instead of being crisp and short, may be dull, and resemble the impact of some soft body, or the noise made by a mouse, a saw, or the finger-nails tapping on wood or scratching a piece of stuff." M. Maxwell explains that the raps generally represent themselves by some alphabetical code as proceeding from some particular intelligence or personification, and each personification manifests itself by a special type of rap. "Sometimes different raps will reply to one another, and one of the most interesting experiences that one can have is to hear these raps, clear, dull, dry, or soft, sounding simultaneously on the table and the floor, and on the wood or stuff or furniture respectively."

M. Maxwell, as the result of a close study of this curious phenomenon, hazards certain conclusions, of which he says the most certain is the close connection of the raps with muscular movements on the part of the sitters. Every muscular movement, even a slight one, appears to be followed by a rap. Thus if, without any one necessarily touching the table, one of the sitters frees his hand from the chain made round the table by the others, moves it about in a circle over the surface of the table, then raises it in the centre and brings it down towards the table, stopping suddenly within a few inches of it, a rap will be produced on the table corresponding with the sudden stoppage of the hand. Similarly, a rap will be produced by a pressure of the foot on the floor, by speaking, by blowing

slightly, or by touching the medium or one of the sitters. Raps produced in this way by the sitters are often stronger than those produced by the medium himself. M. Maxwell suggests as a working hypothesis that there is a certain accumulated force, and that if its equilibrium be suddenly disturbed by the addition of the excess of energy required for the movement, a discharge takes place producing the effect. I confess it produces a somewhat bizarre impression on the mind to read M. Maxwell's precise instructions concerning phenomena the very existence of which is to most of us so obscure or which, if described by any one less apparently well equipped than the author for making accurate observations, one would dismiss with the ruck of occult twaddle with which our experience is so abundantly blighted. Yet M. Maxwell writes with a full knowledge of the fraud to be encountered, and describes in detail the various methods by which the alleged phenomena may be imitated, many of which have come under his own observation. And when he writes that the facts for which he claims attention took place under conditions when such methods were inapplicable, that it is impossible to imitate exactly raps produced without contact on the table, that the raps are easily localised and their vibrations perceptible by auscultation of the table itself, it is not too much to ask that judgment may at least be held suspended as to the validity of his conclusions.

(2) Movements of objects without contact, or with such contact only as would be normally insufficient to produce the results obtained. These again are to be numbered among the phenomena as to the occurrence of which M. Maxwell claims to have reached absolute conviction. And it is in his account of these, given for the most part in merely general terms, that a reader, anxious for material to enable him to form a standard of criticism with which to test the value of the author's observations, will find chief cause for disappointment. Here is a sample (p. 86) of the more than airy way in which M. Maxwell relates the occurrence of these portentous events. The case in question is one of a series of experiments made with Eusapia Paladino. "It was about five o'clock in the evening, and there was broad daylight in the drawing-room at l'Aguélas. We were standing around the table, Eusapia took the hand of one of our number and rested it on the right-hand corner of the table. The table was raised to the level of our foreheads, that is, the top reached a height of at least  $4\frac{3}{4}$  feet from the floor. . . . It was impossible for Eusapia to have lifted the table by normal means. One has but to consider

that she touched only the corner of the table to realise what the weight must have been had she accomplished the feat by muscular effort. Further, she never had sufficient hold of it. It was clearly impossible for her, under the conditions of the experiment, to have used any of the means suggested by her critics, straps, or hooks of some kind." I confess, I think M. Maxwell might advantageously have given such critics a little more opportunity of appreciating exactly what these conditions amounted to. The effect, therefore, of this portion of his book is mainly cumulative, and independent of the importance to be attached to any one of the reported occurrences. The author speaks of many instances of movements of objects without any contact whatever occurring in broad daylight, of curtains shaken, tables lifted, moving to and fro along the floor at command, chairs sliding, etc. Perhaps one of the most interesting cases is the following (p. 93). M. Maxwell wished to repeat a particular experiment, the successful performance of which elsewhere had been notified to him (see *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1896, p. 50). This consisted of the depression, without contact, of the scale of a letter balance. M. Maxwell purchased a letter balance and took it from its box just prior to the experiment. There was sufficient light to enable him to read the indistinctly marked divisions of the scale. "Before our eyes, Eusapia repeatedly made it go down by raising and lowering her hands, palms downwards. Her hands were from 10 to 15 centimetres [nearly 4 to 6 inches] from the plate of the letter balance, and the movements were made without her relinquishing the hands of her neighbours to right and left. It must be noticed that we several times obtained the depression of the plate of the machine while we varied the position of the medium's hands, placing them in front of the machine so as to form a triangle, of which the plate was the apex, and bringing the hands together so that the angle at the apex became very acute. The object of this procedure was to obviate the possibility of the medium producing the effect by means, for example, of a hair between her hands. And in order to make my account complete, I must add that a hair would have been visible. By reversing her hands, so that the palms were upwards, the medium also raised the plate, on which a pocket-book had been placed. We ascertained by measuring the oscillation of the index needle, that the force developed sent it sometimes to the limit of its run, and that it was therefore greater than 90 grammes [ $3\frac{1}{2}$  ounces]."

It was through the mediumship of Eusapia Paladino that M. Maxwell obtained the majority of the phenomena of the kind under consideration. He was a member of a committee which met in 1896 to investigate this medium, immediately after the series held in Cambridge under the auspices of this Society, the issue of which, it will be remembered, was absolutely unfavourable to her claims. The general results of the Cambridge séances were communicated to the French Committee, who were therefore made aware of the fraudulent devices which the Cambridge investigators claimed to have ascertained. Their report will be found in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* for 1896, and I recommend all who believe that Dr. Hodgson and his Cambridge colleagues have had the last word in the controversy concerning the genuineness of Eusapia's mediumship to read it. The French investigators arrive at conclusions in direct conflict with those of the English sitters. They state that they had long been aware of the tricks 'discovered' at Cambridge, and took adequate means to guard against them, and M. Maxwell devotes a considerable portion of his book to an indictment of the Cambridge method of controlling the medium, which consisted, for part of the time at least, in affording the medium opportunities to cheat with a view to ascertaining whether she would avail herself of them,<sup>1</sup> a complaisance of which she took the fullest advantage. Against this method M. Maxwell protests with much vigour. A medium, especially an uneducated medium, does not distinguish, with the scientific precision of her investigators, between normal and abnormal methods of producing some given phenomenon. The exercise of abnormal power is always, *ex hypothesi*, harder or less certain than that of normal power. Hence, supposing the problem set is to move a table, and it is open to her to move it either by abnormal agency or by means of her toe, she will inevitably choose the toe. The use of the latter does not of itself demonstrate the non-existence of the former. The true method of investigation is first to ascertain all possible normal agencies, and then to take steps to eliminate them, pointing out frankly to the medium the while that they are valueless. For my own part, I am not disposed to challenge the soundness of M. Maxwell's contention, and trust that a further opportunity may present itself to English investigators to check his conclusions with regard to this medium on the lines he has indicated.

There is much else of interest in the book upon which I should

<sup>1</sup> See Editorial Note on p. 501.



have liked to touch, but I have already trespassed far beyond the space allotted to me. One word, in conclusion, on M. Maxwell's own attitude towards the phenomena of which he writes. It is certain that while spiritists may congratulate themselves on his testimony in support of the facts on the reality of which they base their creed, they will find but little direct encouragement from him for the theory of spiritistic agency by which they account for these facts. "I believe," he says (p. 13) "in the reality of certain phenomena, of which I have repeatedly been a witness. I do not consider it necessary to attribute them to a supernatural intervention of any kind, but am disposed to think that they are produced by some force existing within ourselves."

In the same way as certain psychical phenomena, such as automatic writing, trance "controls," crystal vision, and so forth, in which an intelligence seems to be present independent of the intelligence of the medium, can be shown beyond dispute to be merely manifestations of his subliminal intelligence, frequently taking the form of a dramatic personification; so may the agency, revealing itself in raps, movements of objects, and other phenomena of a physical character, perhaps be traceable, not to any power external to the medium and the sitters, but merely to a force latent within themselves, and may be but an exteriorisation in a dynamic form, in a way not yet ascertained, of their collective subliminal capacities. Fanciful as this theory may seem to those who feel that unconsciousness of such capacity is sufficient warrant of its non-existence, M. Maxwell (p. 100 *et seq.*) cites several observations in its support. The apparent suggestibility of the personification and the frequency with which the activity of the dynamic agency may be determined by movements on the part of the assistants, whether by an appropriate action of the hand, a contraction of some muscle, a sudden exhalation, or perhaps a mere word,—these seem to point to a closer connection between the operative force and the personality of the sitters than would be expected were the agency due to a source external to themselves. These observations are of the highest interest, and though they have some of them been made before, at least in the case of Eusapia Paladino—as where, for example, it has been noticed that a movement, without apparent contact, of a table has been accompanied by synchronous contortions of the medium—it has been merely with the view of establishing fraud or the employment of some invisible contrivance whereby the movement was effected. M. Maxwell is continuing

his investigations: let us hope that in his account of them he will furnish us with the means of determining which of the competing explanations is the true one. Meanwhile, his present contribution is of much importance, and merits the closest attention of all who are interested in the subject.

EVERARD FEILDING.

NOTE.

M. Maxwell appears to be under a misapprehension as to the methods of investigation adopted at the Cambridge sittings with Eusapia Paladino. When she first came to Cambridge, a number of plans were suggested for making the control of the experiments as satisfactory as possible, *e.g.*, the use of netting, either for confining the medium or separating her from objects which it was hoped might be moved without contact; various methods of tying her; and, above all, sufficient light in the séance room. *She refused to submit to any of these conditions.* The investigators, however, long persevered in making the control in every case as complete as she would allow it to be. They pressed her at each sitting to allow some light in the room, and a very faint light was generally permitted at the beginning; but soon she would insist on complete darkness, and the touches were never felt until after the light was completely extinguished.

The only method of control then allowed was the holding of the medium by the sitters, and they were accustomed to hold her as firmly and continuously as possible. When she resisted this every kind of persuasion short of actual physical force was employed to induce her to submit to it. It was not until the sitters were convinced of the constant fraud practised that their efforts were relaxed, and she was allowed to take her own way without remonstrance.<sup>1</sup>

EDITOR.

*Humanism: Philosophical Essays.* By F. C. S. SCHILLER. (London: Macmillan and Co. 1903.)

A metaphysical discussion in these pages would be an offence devoid alike of precedent and of justification. Unable here to join issue with Mr. Schiller on the details of his invigorating manifesto, I must content myself with drawing the reader's attention to the main principles of the new empiricism which the eternal unfitness

<sup>1</sup>See letter from Mr. Myers in the *Journal S.P.R.*, November, 1895 (Vol. VII., p. 164).

of things has called into life in the very home and stronghold of Absolutism. Oxford, which, in the heyday of John Mill's influence and popularity, led the attack upon the Sensationalism of Locke and Hume, appears to be reverting, with all the ebullient ardour and combative enthusiasm characteristic of that ancient seat of learning, to the very principles which Green and his more brilliant successors flattered themselves they had for ever discredited. Yet the new empiricism is by no means identical with the old. The supposed "devotion of the philosopher to the memory of ancient errors," prevents him at least from repeating obsolete mistakes in discredited terms. Professor William James—the real author of the new doctrine—has baptised it *Pragmatism*. Mr. Schiller prefers to label it *Humanism*, as at once a more general and a more attractive title.

Some months ago, a volume of essays by members of an Oxford philosophical club opened the campaign against the prevalent Oxonian philosophy of the Absolute. The enterprise, more novel at Oxford than elsewhere, attracted and deserved the attention of the limited public to which it appealed. Mr. Schiller, himself the contributor of a noteworthy chapter on "Axioms as Postulates," formulated (rather than proved) a thesis which, if capable of demonstration, would revolutionise the Theory of Knowledge. In the present volume he has brought together a number of essays, collected for the most part from sources hardly accessible to the general public, which explain and develop, for the benefit of the non-technical reader, different aspects of his fundamental doctrine. *Humanism* is not a connected treatise. The argument does not claim to be exhaustive. There are gaps in the exposition which the critic would like to see supplied, and which the author, as I understand, would gladly supply if he could find the leisure. His Humanism aims to be humane; and in his sedulous avoidance of scholastic jargon, he has been tempted to smoothe over difficulties none the less imperative for being scholastic. The book must be regarded as a programme rather than as a proof. But it is addressed to a popular audience, and as such it must be judged. Vigorous in style, uncompromising in statement, it affords, if not a vindication of the pragmatist's position, at least a lively reflection of the true-born pragmatist's character.

All philosophies necessarily start from human experience, and reconstruct it in various ways. Sensationalism overlooked pure thought. A priorism has overlooked everything but pure thought. The pragmatist's claim is that he accepts all features of experience

without distorting any, and takes into account the whole of the concrete nature of man. He recognises the reality and validity of the thought-process which interprets and welds into a systematic whole the data of sense, but he claims that the thought-process is purposive in character and teleological in its methods. "Pure" thought for him is a "non-existent and impossible process." Condemning the aloofness of an "abstract, arid, abstruse, and abhorrent philosophy" from the world of action, he reverts to the old doctrine of Protagoras that "man is the measure of all things," and seeks to co-ordinate the plain man's practical beliefs. Logic has indeed for him a perfectly valid function. A syllogistic chain is none the less cogent because it appears to conflict with some vital human interest. But the ultimate principles which form the basis of all reasoning, according to Mr. Schiller's doctrine in his earlier essay, are neither logically proved nor amenable to proof. They are postulates; they are matters of faith. In all knowledge faith and reason are indivisibly implied: Faith in the postulates which underlie all reasoning, and which we have chosen to believe without proof; Reason which moulds ideas into conformity with these postulates. "In principle," says Mr. Schiller, "Pragmatism overcomes the old antithesis between Faith and Reason." The whole of our thought, according to Pragmatism, is controlled and inspired by practical interests, although we may frequently "fail to detect the hidden interest which incites the reason to be dispassionate." Instead, therefore, of seeking to base Ethics upon Metaphysical results, regulating practice in accordance with principles derived from the exercise of pure thought, Pragmatism founds Metaphysics upon Ethics, thought upon the practical needs which incite to action. To commence the exposition of a system of philosophy, as Mr. Schiller does, with a chapter on the Ethical Basis of Metaphysics may, in fact, prove to be the intolerable paradox it seems. Yet it is a paradox by the truth or falsity of which the whole pragmatist doctrine is bound to stand or fall.

Into the examination of this doctrine on its general merits I do not propose to enter. I must confine myself to noticing some conclusions Mr. Schiller, with most creditable consistency, is driven into in the chapters which may be supposed to interest more particularly readers of these *Proceedings*. Chapter XIII., on the Desire for Immortality, is a reprint of the well-known article in which Mr. Schiller questioned the assumed general desire for personal immortality, and initiated a very important enquiry, since then concluded,

into the actual state of human sentiment with regard to a future life. Of Chapter XV.,<sup>1</sup> on Philosophy and the Scientific Investigation of a Future Life, I need say little beyond reminding our readers of the main points of the argument: that neither philosophy nor science can effectually disprove the possibility of a future life, that its nature can only be investigated by scientific methods; that no investigation, and consequently no definite knowledge about it whatever is possible, unless the hypothetical future life happens to be in some sense continuous with the present form of consciousness, and in important respects akin to our present existence.

It is in Chapter XIV. that the fundamental paradox of Pragmatism comes to light in a particularly glaring fashion, and challenges discussion in these pages. Mr. Schiller argues first that Immortality is an ethical postulate, and from the irresistibility of the postulate he infers the reality of the thing postulated. I do not in the least wish to question the first step in the argument, essentially open to question though I believe it to be. If the first step in the argument is illegitimate, the supposed proof of the conclusion vanishes into thin air. But even if we grant the legitimacy of a doubtful postulate, the argument is surely vitiated by a new form of a very ancient fallacy. The plain man is painfully aware of the difference between the 100 dollars he would like to have in his wallet and the actual dollars which too often are not there. Admit that theoretical construction, the whole universe of organised knowledge, is controlled through and through by practical needs, articulated by postulates which we will to believe, and it may still be quite possible to co-ordinate at every moment the particulars of our present, our past, and our future experience (to some extent), for our possible future experience is in some sense predetermined by that which is present and actual. But Pragmatism does not, on the one hand, seem to afford any means of transcending actual experience, nor of setting any limits to the variations in the postulates which we may find it convenient to make; and on the other hand it seems plain that the hypothetical future life can no more enter into our *actual* experience than Mr. Schiller's experience of the cogency of his argument enters into my actual experience.

F. N. HALES.

<sup>1</sup> First published in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XV., pp. 53-64.

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(OCTOBER, 1904.)

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N.B.—*Members and Associates of the American Branch are requested to send notice of any change of address to the Secretary, 5 Boylston Place, Boston, Mass.*

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OF THE

## Society for Psychical Research

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